Dante's Divine Comedy

Dante Alighieri, Charles Bagot Cayley

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DANTE'S
DIVINE COMEDY.

THE VISION OF HELL:

TRANSLATED IN THE ORIGINAL TERNARY RHYME

BY

C. B. CAYLEY, B.A.

Non ita certandi cupidus, quàm propter amorem,
Quod te imitari aveo. LUCRETIUS.

LONDON:
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1851.

THIS VOLUME

IS TO

FRANKLIN LEIFCHILD, ESQ.,

WITH

ENTIRE AFFECTION DEDICATED.

Nec me animi fallit, Graiorum obscura reperta
Difficile illustrare Latinis versibus esse,
Propter egestatem linguæ et rerum novitatem ;
Sed tua me virtus tamen, et sperata voluptas
Suavis amicitiæ, quemvis perferre laborem
Cogit, et inducit noctis vigilare serenas,
Quærentem dictis quibus, aut quo carmine demum,
Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti,
Res quibus occultas penitus convisere possis.

LUCRETIUS

Nor 'scapes it me, how hard the enterprise,
To illustrate the high recondite sense
[Of Tuscan poets with an English rhyme ;]
Nathless thy virtue, and the hoped-for pleasure
Of thy sweet friendship, me compel to bear
All labour, and to watch the calm nights through,
Exploring by what words, what numbers even,
I may dispread clear beams before thy mind,
That inly thou mayst view all things withdrawn.

PREFACE.

Our lot is not fallen upon a time that is readily pleased with any attempts in poetical translation; not indeed because they are judged, in the minds of the generality, by too high or too refined a standard, but because there exists for them no standard positive or satisfactory enough to control the passing humours of the ingenious reader, who is naturally, in such a state of ignorance, rendered more inclinable to censoriousness than to sympathetic lenity. This has become the state of public feeling, because our old standards of translation have fallen into disrepute, and our established methods become obsolete, while those that must succeed them are but vaguely or negatively intimated by the critic, not realized as yet, nor illustrated, beyond a very few brilliant instances, by the actual labours of the artist; whence it has been said by a late reviewer, that we have

rather learnt what translation should not, than what it should, be. We have learnt what translation should not be from that general revolution in English poetry, which separates our modern schools from the imitators of Pope and Dryden, and which has influenced not less the sentiments, than the style and versification of the most successful writers, introducing a pretty general distaste for our old models, which is more strongly felt, and that for a just reason, with regard to translated works than original. For in the latter kind we cannot absolutely condemn any canons of style that are suited to the calibre of a man's sentiments, the régime of his spiritual life, or the decorum which is approved among his public; but when he characters the sentiments of an alien author, we are offended if his forms of writing be too narrow, stiff, or crooked, to afford free passage to the currents of such sentiments; and of such a cast have been notoriously the forms adopted in most translations of the eighteenth century, which saw Hoole's Tasso supersede that of Fairfax. Or as Goethe complains, that the poets of his

time put a deal of water into the ink*, so these translators copiously treated the good classical sepia ink with the cold waters of paraphrase, the color-quelling vinegar of abstraction, and the sands of etiquette, till they had taken all semblance of antiquity from its "pale and ineffectual" tinge.

To these writers have succeeded various experimental schools, wherein are men of enough wit and boldness, but hardly having that industry and "thorough-goingness" which is requisite to establish new principles. Among them is one that may be called the chemical school, who occupy themselves upon the matter without any regard to the form of their original; a few of whom analyze words by a curious etymological process that has rather the effect of alchemy; others retain punctiliously one trait of form, by adhering to the construction of each sentence, which is often a thing of the slightest consequence, as we see by "examples of Inversion" in Lindley Murray. All this school are of course little liable to

* Maximen und Reflectionen.

afflict the spirit of their orginal by constraining it under predetermined special forms; but they much rather endanger its æsthetic vitality by destroying all animal form that seems connatural to it. Thus their translations, whether without metre or in verse exceeding blank, have an effect essentially prosaic, which renders them less inviting to the lovers of art than to the historian, the philologist, or other scientific men. In another and far higher kind of works, we see diligent attention paid to both form and matter; nevertheless, there may be even here much wanting, if they do not evince sufficient regard to the idiom in which they shall be written. For the force and beauty of an expression depend mainly on its congruity with such forms and processes of thinking, as the reader is accustomed, if not constrained, to cultivate by the structure of his native language; which thing makes his mind as it were an element for that expression to work upon, by direct and indirect impulse, so that if he be not conformed and adapted thereto, we may liken it to a misplaced limb, which presents to us a material beauty only, and not

the beauty of life, or even of mechanism. Only the adaptation of a fine expression to another language must not involve too great a modification of its moulding; for as the limbs of the higher animals can be brought to act upon two or even three elements, so the finer forms of speaking can be transferred, if we allow them as it were the proper change of attitude, to all languages of articulating men. To attain this object in single terms or apophthegms is often looked on as a singular piece of good luck; but to attain it perpetually and uniformly would be the characteristic of the most perfect translator; whose principles only, not his acquired mastery, may, we hope, find some new illustration from the present effort.

Amid a public state of apathy and uncertainty on the canons and the value of translation, it will be rightly thought inexcusable if we have reattempted, without graver reasons, the oft-repeated task of doing Dante into English; and these reasons must of course be sought among the defects attributable to our chief predecessors; not defects, I must subjoin, in their

mere execution, which it would be invidious or arrogant to compare with our own, but in such general principles as have been distinguished in the above heads. These defects we may be entitled and required to censure frankly and calmly, as we have inwardly and without special incitement observed them long ago. But we must first acknowledge that those whom we really think the best translators from Dante have left their works unfinished; and that if Merivale or Dayman had rendered the whole poem as they have rendered some cantos, or the entire lay (Cantica) of Hell, they would, candidly speaking, "give us pause" in the present undertaking. But since we hope without slackness to proceed to the remaining Lays of Purgatory and Paradise, we have thought it most advisable to begin on our own foundations. And let it be my excuse for not saying more of Dayman's Inferno, that to avoid all copying from a version of like principles with my own I have abstained from reading above a few pages.

However, the translations most before the public

are not these, but the complete works of Cary and of Wright, besides versions of single passages, added to collections of original poems, which are often done by masterly hands, but are too brief and scattered to diffuse a fair notion of the Divine Comedy. Among such masterly fragments, we can scarcely comprise those of one author, from whose talents much might have been expected; for Leigh Hunt * evidently translates Dante with a peculiar reluctance and disrelish, which has grown no doubt from the mean idea he entertains of the moral greatness and wisdom in him: for a utilitarian philanthropist must always have a mean idea of the Singer of God's righteousness, "Cantor della Rettitudine," who proclaims a principle of retribution to overrule the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." This is an obliquity in Leigh Hunt's ethical view, which singularity limits his sensibility, and vitiates his taste for the poetical excellence of the "Comedy," and makes, we might almost

* See Stories from Italian poets.

say, his

"Spirit of touch
Hard as the palm of ploughboys."

Returning to those who have translated Dante's Comedy in good earnest, we must state, that Cary, being too careful to give the poem a uniformly dignified tone (which desire we anticipate from his rejection of the very title of "Comedy)," has adulterated all its franker style with the pomp and stiffness of our traditional epic poems, and so incurs the fault attributed to our old translators, of uttering one man's thoughts in the phraseology proper to another confraternity; hence he has not represented with spirit the horrible grotesque of Dante in the punishments of meaner sinners, nor has he followed him in his bolder and quainter ways of coining words and phrases, so that the line,

"Se il ciel gli addolcra, o l'inferno gli attosca,"
CANTO VI.

is rendered,—

If Heaven's sweet cup, or poisonous drug of hell,
Be to their taste applied,

in a tone less proper to the sudden emotion of the speaker.

As to Wright's translation, he seems chiefly to have rivalled his predecessor by persuading the public that he had imitated the versification of Dante's poem, which he has indeed counterfeited to the eye, although the reading of a few triplets will show, that he has adopted a much poorer and looser metre, of which the peculiarity is easily analyzed. Every rhyme in Dante is threefold; the middle line of one triplet ending like the first and third of the succeeding triplet; so that one consonance is never abandoned, until another has commenced; accordingly the measure cannot be broken into stanzas, but has a woven continuity, that seems proper to a poem on eternity, although it would seem heavy and monotonous for a lighter and a mundane subject. But in Wright the rhymes are but double, and fall upon dissimilar points within the triplet; hence the measure divides itself into stanzas, and that too at irregular intervals, and in our general impression,

> "Beguiles us with a counterfeit,
> Resembling Majesty, which, being touch'd and tried,
> Proves valueless."

However, this false march of rhymes confines him generally to the same number of lines as his original, and preserves him from that vice of paraphrase which is sometimes admitted even by Cary. Besides, Wright's language is sometimes terribly weakened by a boarding-school or family-Shakspeare etiquette; as where he renders "la meretrice," by "that wicked, meretricious dame," Canto xiii., and similarly treats another verse, which I will not now quote, lest the truly moral plainness of the Italian should thus, without the context, have an effect of grossness.

It will behove me, lastly, to say a few words on a recent prose version of the Inferno, which attempts to combine the virtues of a grammatical interpretation for the Italian student, and a literary version for the general English reader, and which achieves this twofold object, perhaps, to nearly the utmost extent at which it is compatible with itself. I still think this

work will be more read with the original than without; for besides the general disadvantage of its prosaic form, there is something in its language or style that reminds us more of the writer's celebrated brother, the author of Sartor Resartus, than of the style of Dante, so that many phrases of wonderful precision and efficiency when we compare the Italian, appear too uncouth and knotty for reading alone, presuming we wish to conceive the smooth organic development of thoughts in the Florentine intellect. Furthermore many passages have required, under Mr. J. Carlyle's treatment, to be doubly rendered, that is literally in the text, and more perspicuously in the notes, or *vice versâ;* which process hinders us in reading the text continuously; whereas a decided literary version should require no notes that are merely exegetic, and its text should be "in seipso totus, teres atque rotundus,"—in itself whole, round, and handy. On the same principle all the allegorical proper names in the poem, which are of Italian formation, should be replaced by English, or,

if need be, by Greek or Latin equivalents intelligible in a classical day-school; which substitution has never, I think, been thoroughly made but in the present version; see Canto xxii. I may note here that I have in a few cases modified the orthography of other proper names, in pronouncing which an Englishman might make disagreeable mistakes: thus I have Fûtchi for Fucci, &c. I have now discussed my predecessors in this field, so far as is requisite to illustrate the principles on which I have written, and I must waive such a minute examination of them, as would imply a relative criticism of my own execution. For on this subject who shall judge me but the "ermine-robed great world," for whose approval I am but provisionally encouraged to hope by the kind criticisms of our modern "Averrois che 'l gran Comento feo," that is the well known "Comento Analitico sopra Dante Alighieri" of Signor Rossetti, and by other gentlemen of known literary attainments and no shallow acquaintance with this subject.

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DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY.

THE VISION OF HELL.

CANTO I.

Upon the journey of our life midway,
I found myself within a darksome wood,
As from the right path I had gone astray.
Ah! but to speak hereof is drearihood;
This wood so wild, so stubborn, and so keen,
That fear is by the very thought renewed;
'Tis bitter like as hardly death had been;
But still to show the good, which thence I shared,
I must relate what I besides have seen.

How first I entered, ill may be declared;
I was indeed so full of slumber then,
When first beyond the way of truth I fared.
But coming 'neath a hill, by which the glen
Was bounded, that had stung my heart with ruth,
I lifted up mine eyes, and fixed my ken
Upon the ridges, which I saw in sooth
Already vested in the planet's rays,
That guides mankind in every quest to truth.
This sight some portion of the fear allays,
Which in the lake, even my heart, had stayed
That night, when pity followed all my ways.
And as a man, whose very breath's afraid,
Emerging from the billows on the shore,
Turns to the perilous deep, and stops dismayed;
Thus did my spirit, fleeing evermore,
Turn back to look again upon that pass,
Which never mortal has with life gone o'er.
My weary frame I rested for a space,
And moved along the desert strand anew,
Keeping my firmer foot in lower place.

And lo! as first the steep upon me grew,
A lynx of motion most adroit and light,
And covered with a skin of speckled hue,
Who never would avoid out of my sight,
But hindered me so sorely of my way,
That oft I turned my back to take my flight.
The time was early morning, on that day
When rose the sun with those same stars combined
That were with him, when love Divine did sway
Those bright things first into the paths designed;
So that I felt some ground for hope, I ween,
From the sweet hour, and from the season kind,
And that fell creature's comely-checkered skin.
But not enough to view, without ill cheer,
The vision of a lion intervene,
Who full upon me rushing did appear,
With lifted head and ravenous raging mien,
That seemed to make the air before him fear;
A she-wolf eke, whose body bare and lean
Seemed loaded with all fury of desire,
Whence many a wight a woeful age hath seen;

Who with such heaviness did me inspire
By fears, that ever issued from her face,
That I gave up all hope of mounting higher.
And as a man, who stood in happy case
Acquiring, when his time of loss is come,
For tears and woes in every thought has place;
So this unresting beast made me become,
Who fronting me for ever, piece by piece,
Aye pusht me backward, where the sun is dumb.
Thus ruining down lower by degrees,
I found emerging on my view a wight,
That seemed half mute with holding long his peace.
Whom, meeting in that monstrous wild my sight,
I called unto, "Have pity, pity on me,
Whate'er thou art, or very man, or sprite!"
He answered, "Once a man, not such for thee;
My parents too were of the Lombard state,
And Mantuans by birthplace, he and she;
And I was born sub Julio, tho' late,
And lived at Rome beneath Augustus mild,
When false and futile gods were yet in date;

A poet — and I sang the righteous child
  Of old Anchises, how he sped from Troy,
When fires consuming haughty Ilion spoiled.
But thou, why turnest back to such annoy?
  Why dost thou not the mount delightsome tread,
Which is the cause and principle of joy?"
"Now art thou Virgil? art thou that well-head,
  That spreadeth out in speech so broad a river?"
These words with shame-faced reverence I said.
"O light and glory of all bards for ever,
  As I have sought thy book, so save me now
For my great love and for my long endeavor;
Thou art my master and my author thou,
  And thou alone art he, from whom I took
The noble style, which doth exalt my brow.
Look on the beast from whom I turned, O look;
  Deliver me from her, thou sage renowned,
Who has with fright my veins and pulses shook."
"Another passage must for thee be found,"
  He answered, when my weeping he surveyed,
"If thou wilt pass the salvage place's bound.

For yonder beast, who so to howl thee made,
By no man ever lets her road be past,
But hinders them, yea slays them as her trade;
Whose nature hath so foul and wrong a cast,
That she her greedy will can never sate,
But seems more famished after food than fast.
Of many an animal she makes her mate,
And many more will have, until that hound
Shall come, who must with grief cut short her date;
Whose meat in land or dross shall not be found,
But virtue, wisdom, love, shall feed him ever,
And Feltro unto Feltro be his bound;
He shall this humbled Italy deliver,
For which Euryalus, Nisus, Turnus, fell
Bewounded, and Camilla knew man never;
He shall this beast from tower and town compel,
Till whence she came he force her to return,
Whence envy roused her, to the hold of hell.
Now for thy weal this method I discern
And counsel, that thou follow me as guide,
And I will take thee hence, by tracts eterne,

Where wailings of despair thy sense will gride,
And ancient spirits thou wilt see tormented,
By each of whom the second death is cried.
And thou wilt see the souls that live contented
In flames, thro' which they hope to mount up higher
To blessed realms, when heaven has once consented;
To which, if thou wilt afterwards aspire,
Behold, a spirit worthier than I
Shall come, and I, departing, leave thee by her;
For yonder emperor, that reigns on high,
Because I have obeyed not his decree,
Will have me not his city to draw nigh.
O'er all with might, and there with majesty
He reigns, there keeps his city and high throne;
O blessed, whom he chooses there to see."
"I charge thee, by that God, to thee unknown,
Poet," I cried, "to lead me as thou sayest,
That I may flee this hurt, nor this alone,
Till on St. Peter's gate mine eyes may rest,
And those who by thy telling make such moan."
Then forth he moved, and I behind him prest.

CANTO II.

Day was departing, and the air embrowned
Had summoned all, that lives on earth, away
From toil and pain; I, only I, was bound
At once the double warfare to assay,
By travel and by ruth upon me laid,
Which Memory that errs not shall portray.
O Muses, O high Genius, now give aid;
O Mind that wrotest down what I descried,
Herein thy nobleness shall be displayed.
I thus began, "Poet, that art my guide,
Weigh well my puissance, if it suffice,
Ere that high quest unto me thou confide.
Thou sayest that Silvius' ancestor with eyes
Corruptible the eternal realm surveyed,
And there was present, after fleshly guise;

Still, though the enemy of Evil laid
This grace on *him*, minding the high effect
Of who? and what? should from his root be made,
It seems not vain to human intellect;
For he of parent Rome and all her sway
Was founder, in the empyreal heavens elect:
All which (to speak the truth if I assay)
Were thus establisht for the sacred seat,
Which heirs o' th' elder Peter hold alway.
This proud adventure, which thou makest him meet,
Led him to hear such things as framed his fate
Of conquest, and the Pope's array complete.
Since then the chosen 'Vas' beheld your state,
To carry thence assurance to our creed,
Which to the path of welfare is the gate.
But I! if I go, who shall bid me speed?
For no Eneas, nor no Paul am I;
My claims nor I nor others would concede.
If then upon this enterprise I fly,
I fear me, that like folly it may close;
Thy sense, what ill I argue, can supply."

And like a man unchoosing what he chose,
Whose former mind by some new thought is crost,
Till far astray from his first plan he goes;
Thus I became, upon this lightless coast,
And, thinking, all that fire of enterprise,
Which I had in me at the first, I lost.
"If well the sense thou speakest I surmise,"
Replied that shade magnanimous, "thy mind
Must be 'offended' here with cowardice;
The which full oft encumbereth mankind,
And turns them back from honoured high career,
Like seeing beasts, when shadows pass behind.
From this misgiving then thy soul to clear,
I'll tell thee why I came, and, when I erst
Took thought for thee, what tale had reacht my ear.
I stood among the neither saved nor curst,
When called me such a blest and beauteous One,
That to command me I besought her first.
Her eyes more brightly than the Planet shone,
And she addrest me, O how smooth and sweet,
With angel voice, in language of her own:

'O Mantuan soul, with courtesies replete,
Whose fame endures on earth, and sees no end,
And shall endure, till earth her doom do meet;
A friend of mine, whom Fortune doth not friend,
Is so much hindered in the desert strand,
That fear has driven him from his course to bend;
And he may now have strayed so far from hand,
That I have risen too late relief to gain,
By tidings, which in heaven I understand.
Now go, and by thy words adorned strain,
And all that else can for his rescue be,
So speed him, that consoled I may remain.
My name is Beatris, who summon thee;
I come from where I would again abide;
The love that sent me forth now speaks in me:
When I shall stand before my Lord,' she cried,
'Thy praises ever on my tongue will lie.'
And there she ended; thereon I replied,—
'O Lady of the puissance, whereby
The race of man doth every bound exceed,
Within the circles of the greater sky;

Thy gentle hest so pleaseth me indeed,
That forthwith to obey would seem too late;
To tell thy pleasure is no further need.
But tell me now, what reason may create
Thy boldness to come down to this dread centre,
From thy wide home of happy, longed-for state?'
'If thou so deeply into all wouldst enter,'
She answered with a smile, 'I will make known,
Why without dread into this place I venture.
All dread should be conceived from things alone
Which have the power to work us harm and bale;
From others not, for dread in such is none.
Now I'm so made by God, (thus far avail
His gifts), that your woe finds in me no room,
Nor flames from yon great burning me assail.
A gentle Lady is in heaven, of whom
This obstacle is mourned, where thou art sent;
She breaks on high the force of bitter doom.
This Lady with her quest to Lucia went,
And said, "Thy loyal one has need of thee,
And I commend him unto thy content."

Lucia, of all unkindness enemy,
  Arose, and found me sitting in my place,
In antique Rachel her society.
She said, "O Beatris, God's very praise,
  Why dost not succour him who loved thee so,
Who quitted for thy sake the vulgar ways?
Dost thou not hear the wailing of his woe?
  Nor see the death by which he is bestead
Upon the floods that nought to Neptune owe?"
No man on earth so quickly ever sped
  To seek his gain, or shun his injury,
As I then hasted, when these words were said.
Down came I from my blessed throne for thee,
  Relying on thy verses' gallant flow,
Which gives thee and thy hearers dignity.'
When all her reasoning she had ended so,
  She weeping turned away her shining eyes,
And winged my heart with eagerness to go.
I came to thee, fulfilling her emprise;
  I took thee from yon beast that kept impairing
Thy progress up the beauteous mount to rise.

Then why, O why, remainest thou despairing?
Why lodges in thy bosom still the craven?
Why hast thou not more frankness and more daring?
When thou art cared-for in the court of heaven
By yon three blessed ladies, and dost hold
Such good assurance thro' my promise given?"
As tender flowers, that by the dark and cold
Were bowed and shut, feeling the sunbeams white,
Rise on the stalk together and unfold,
Thus I became in my forwearied sprite,
And such good courage to my bosom ran,
That I made answer, like a franker wight.
"O ruthful she, my rescue that began,
And thou that didst so readily obey
The sound of her true words, high hearted man!
Thou dost my soul with inclination sway
So to this quest by thy persuasive strain,
That I return unto my former way.
Now go there's but a will between us twain;
Be thou my guide and master, and my lord."
So answered I, and, when he moved again,
The deep and salvage passage we explored.

CANTO III.

"THROUGH me you pass into the city of woe;
Through me you pass eternal woes to prove;
Through me among the blasted race you go.
'Twas Justice did my most high Author move,
And I have been the work of power divine,
Of supreme wisdom, and of primal love.
No creature has an elder date than mine,
Unless eternal, and I have no end;
O you that enter me, all hope resign."
These words I saw in darksome colour penned
Above a gate, and, "Master mine," I said,
"Their sense is harsh for me to apprehend."
He, like a man alert, this answer made:
"Here all suspicion must be left behind,
All cowardice henceforward must be dead.

We have arrived the place where thou wilt find,
As I have told thee, that tormented band
That have the intellectual good resigned."
And then he placed his hand within my hand,
And gave me heart with his assured mien,
And set me thus within the secret land.
There sighs, laments, and shouts of woe between,
Rang through the air that feels no starry force,
At which I wept ere I'd a moment been.
Tongues diverse, strains of horrible discourse,
And dolorous words, and accents of despite,
And clashing hands, and voices loud and hoarse,
A tumult made, which circles through the night
Of that untemporal and clouded air,
Like sand, that breath of whirlwind sets on flight.
And I, whose head was girt with horror there,
Said, "Master mine, what may this turmoil be;
What race is this, so vanquished with despair?"
And he replied, "This form of misery
Involves the wretched souls who did pursue
No life deserving praise nor infamy.

Commingled are they with the caitiff crew
  Of angels, who nor openly rebelled,
Nor stood for God, and kept but self in view;
Whom, not to grow less fair, the heavens expelled,
  And hell receives not in its bottom low,
Lest by the bad some triumph might be held."
"Master," I said, "what is that heavy woe
  That makes them to lament with such loud breath?"
And he replied, "Thou shalt in few words know:
These are unvisited by hope of death,
  And each accounts his darkling life so base,
That every lot besides he envieth.
Of their renown the world admits no trace;
  Mercy and Justice them alike despise;
Of such we talk not, look on them and pass."
And as I gazed, a banner met mine eyes,
  That circling with a rapidity moved along,
That all repose appeareth to misprise.
And in its rear there came a troop so long
  Of people, that I could not have believed
Death ever had disfeatured such a throng.

Of whom, the first that clearly I perceived,
I knew and recognised as that man's shade,
Whose cowardice the great refuse achieved.
Incontinent I knew, and sure was made,
That I had by the caitiff sect arrived,
Whom both God and his enemies upbraid.
These miserable wights, who never lived,
Were naked all, and persecuted sore
By wasps and by large gnats that herein thrived.
These bathed in blood their faces evermore,
Which then, with tears commingled, at their feet
Was gathered up by loathly worms good store.
And when I gave my glance a broader beat,
On a great river's marge I found a force
Of ghosts, and said, "Now, master, I entreat
To learn what these are; by what fatal course
They look so eager to be ferried over,
As I discern, although this light be hoarse?"
And he replied, "All this thou shalt discover,
As soon as we have brought our steps to rest
On Acherontine banks, where sorrows hover."

Then I, with eyelids bashful and deprest,
Through fear my speech was counter to his will,
From speech abstaining, to the river prest.
And lo! within a bark approaching still
An old man, white with antiquated hide,
Who shouted, "Woe befall you, spirits ill!
By you shall heaven be never more descried;
I come to lead you to the further shore,
Eternal dark, that frost and fire divide.
And thou, quick soul, which hither hast come o'er,
Dispart thyself from these that are the dead."
But when he saw me stirring nathemore,
"By other tracks, by other gates," he said,
"Approach the marge, not here, and by a bark
Of lighter build thy body shall be sped."
Then spoke my guide, "O Charon, leave thy cark;
This thing is willed in such a place that will
Is one with can,—now speak not from the mark."
And hereupon his woolly cheeks were still,
This pilot on the livid swamp enshipt,
Whose eyeball many a ring of flame did fill.

But all the spirits there, forlorn and stript,
  Their color drop, and teeth with teeth engage,
When by the savage sounds their ear is nipt,
Blaspheming God, their proper parentage,
  The race of man, the time, and place, and seed
Of their conception, and their natal stage.
Then all together on their track proceed,
  In loud bewailings to this margin evil,
For every man who fears not God, decreed.
There, with his eyes of flame, Charon the devil
  Assembles them, with beck instead of call,
And aye at each who lags his oar is level.
And even as the leaves in autumn fall
  One close upon another, till the spray
Views on the ground her weeds divested all;
Thus Adam's evil race none other way
  From off the margin, one by one, 'gan bound,
Through becks, as birds the whistle which obey.
Then on they wend athwart the wave embrowned,
  And ere the first to yonder bank are sped,
Another muster is on this side found.

"O son," the courteous master to me said,
"The souls, that in the wrath of God expire,
Assemble hither, from all countries led
And eagerly to pass the stream require,
For God's high justice spurs them to proceed,
Through which the fear is changed into desire.
To pass this way no "spirit of health" can need:
If Charon of thy coming then complain,
Thou mayst discern the import of his rede."
When this was ended, all the darksome plain
Trembled so violently, that from fright
Memory ensteepeth me in sweat again.
The land of tears gave out a gust, whence light
Of lurid crimson overflasht the hell,
Which every feeling in me vanquisht quite,
And like a man whom sleep hath seized, I fell.

CANTO IV.

The swound of sleep within my head was broke
With grating thunder, whence my frame I shook,
Like one that is with violence awoke,
And round, with my reposed eye, 'gan look,
And firmly gazing, as upright I rose,
In cognisance the situation took;
Which now in very truth the margin shows
Of that abysmal valley, dolorous,
That blends a thunder from unbounded woes;
Obscure, unfathomable, nebulous —
For all that to the bottom I might send
My gaze, I could descry no object thus.
"Now let us down that darkling world descend,"
Began the poet, grown quite pallid; "I
Shall be the first, and thou shalt after wend."

But when his changed color I espy,
"How shall I come," I said, "if thou do fear;
That dost encourage me, when doubts are by?
"The anguish of the tribe," said he, "that here
Lives underneath, painteth my face in this
Pale ruth, which doth like dread to thee appear.
Come now, for our long journey makes amiss
To linger:" then he past and bore me on
To the first circle, which engirds the abyss.
Here, so far as from harkening might be known,
There was no wailing, further than by sighs
That shake the air of that eternal zone.
And this proceeds from woe, sāns agonies,
Inherent in a vast and numerous band
Of manly, infantine, or female guise.
Said my good master, "Dost thou not demand
What people those are yonder whom we see?
Now I would have thee know, while here at hand,
That they've not sinned, and merits if there be
In them, yet these are without baptism vain,
That portal of the path believed by thee.

Because they lived before the Christian reign,
They rendered worship unto God unduly,
And I myself am one of yonder train.
For this offence, and no more evil truly,
Are we undone, and but so far offended,
That without hope desire pervades us throughly."
Great grief my heart nipt, when I apprehended
His words, for folk in merit standing high
I knew, who in this limbo were suspended.
" Tell me, my master, tell, my lord," said I,
Desiring to be certain of that creed
Which finally subdueth every lie,
" Knowest thou, if any yet, for his own meed,
Or other's, have gone out to join the blest?"
Then he, who did my covert meaning heed,
Replied, " When I was yet a novel guest
In this domain, I saw a puissant One,
That came with head in crown triumphal drest;
And our first parent's shade, Abel his son,
And Noah, from among us forth did bring,
With Moses, who the law had given and done,

And Abraham patriarch, and David king,
And Israel, his father and his race,
And Rachel, whom he wrought so long to win,
And many others, and in happy place
Set them; and I would teach thee, that before
This hour, no soul of man attained to grace."
For all he spoke we rested not, but bore
Still onward thro' the wood; that wood, I say,
Of spirits thick and thronging evermore.
When we had gone but yet a little way
On this side from the summit, lo! a flame,
That girt with hemisphere of darkness, lay.
Nor yet within some distance thence we came,
But near enow for me to see in part,
That folk was there of honorable fame.
"O thou, that honorest all lore and art,
Say, who are these, that are so honored,
That from the common life they stand apart?"
"That honorable praise of them," he said,
"That sounds upon your land of living men,
Wins grace from heaven that so lifts up their head."

I heard a voice proclaiming even then,
"Honor unto the most high poet yield;
His shade, that had departed, comes agen."
And when the voice had ended and was stilled,
Four mighty shades approaching I survey,
Whose countenance neither joy nor sadness filled.
My gracious master then began to say,
"See him that comes with sword in hand along,
And leadeth, like an honored liege, the way;
That is Homeros, paramount of song;
Horatius, the satirist, is nigh;
Ovidius third, Lucanus last in throng.
Because that each partaketh, as do I,
The name, which from the single voice did sound,
They do me honor, and do well thereby:"
Thus all the fair assembled school I found,
Of this the master of sublimest song,
That like an eagle flies above their bound.
They reasoned now among themselves not long,
And turned to me with signs of courtesy,
My gracious master smiling hereupon;

And far more honor they vouchsafed to me,
  By making me a member of their train,
And sixth in this deep-witted company.
Then moved we on towards the light amain,
  Discoursing things which here 'tis good to hide,
As there to speak of them was meet again.
A noble castle we arrived beside,
  That in the midst of seven high walls doth stand,
And fair protecting waters round it glide;
Over the which we passed, like to firm land;
  By seven gates these noble wits and I
Came through, where fresh and verdant swards expand.
A tribe was there of grave and tardy eye;
  Semblance of great authority they wore,
And spoke with voices soft unfrequently.
Thus to a corner of the tract we bore,
  And reacht an open place full high and sheen,
Whence all could be descried and well lookt o'er.
There, in my front, upon the enamel green,
  Appeared the mighty shades without disguise,
Whom in my soul I glory to have seen.

I saw Electra with large companies
Of friends, where Hector and Eneas be,
And Cæsar, arm'd with his gier-eagle eyes.
I saw Camilla and Penthesilee
Another way, where king Latinus, graced,
Sat in his child Lavinia's company;
I saw that Brutus who the Tarquin chased,
Lucrece, Cornelia, Marcia, Julia;
And all alone I saw Saladdin placed.
And lifting thence my lids a little way,
I saw the master unto those who know,
Sitting his philosophic clan to sway;
Him all admire, and honor to him show.
I saw both Plato there, and Socrates,
That nigher stand to him before the row.
Zeno, Heraclitus, Empedocles,
That giver of all to chance, Democritus,
And Anaxagoras, Diogenes,
Thales, and the good specialist (I thus
Call Dioscorides); Orpheus did I see,
And ethic Seneca, Tullius, Livius,

Euclid geometer, and Ptolemee,
Galenus, Avicen, Hippocrates,
And Averrois, (the mighty gloss made he).
I cannot throughly call to mind all these,
For my long theme pursues me with such care,
My tongue seems oft before its task to freeze.
From six to twain our troop was minisht there;
My wise guide led me forth another way,
Out of the still into the trembling air;
I reacht a land, where never glints a ray.

CANTO V.

So passed I from that zone, the first in hell,
  Down to the next, which less includes of space,
And pains more poignant, which to shrieks compel.
There snarling Minos, at the entering-place,
  Stands horrible, and crimes examines there,
And judges, and decides with knots each case.
I say, when miscreated spirits fare
  Before him, cleanly each herself confesses,
And he, who knowingly can faults compare,
Makes out what place she suits in hell, and dresses
  His tail as many times about his waist,
As she must go down grades in those abysses.
Before him many souls are ever placed,
  In turn advances each, her doom to know,
And speaks, and hears, and downward then is chased.

"O thou, that comest to the abodes of woe,"
Said Minos, when he cast his eye on me,
Letting his high official 'havior go;
"Look where thou treadest, or who is bound for thee;
Let the broad entrance lead thee not astray."
Thereat my guide said, "Let thy shouting be;
Withhold him not upon his fated way;
This thing is willed in such a place that will
And can are one, and now no more gainsay."
Hereat the notes of anguish 'gin to fill
Mine ear, and hence I enter, where the wails
Of mighty lamentation strike me still.
I reach a place, where voice of sunlight fails,
Which boometh like a troubled sea, whose breast
Is made the battle-field of adverse gales.
That hellish hurricane, which knows no rest,
Compels the spirits in its violence,
And whirling, dashing, maketh them distrest.
As they confront the overthrow, from thence
Ariseth sigh or wailing, or lament,
Or blasphemies against Omnipotence.

I understood, that to this chastisement
Are doomed the carnal sinners, who have made
Their reason subject unto lust's consent.
And as the starlings raise their wings displayed,
In the cold months a squadron close and wide,
So those ill spirits, on the gusts conveyed,
Aloft, adown, before, behind, aside,
Are flung, whom never solacing hope comes nigh,
Of rest, or e'en less torment to abide.
And as the cranes, chanting their lays, do fly
In one long line upon the air outspread,
Thus I saw ghosts, drawing deep moans, come nigh,
That are upon this torment ravished.
At which I said, "O master, what are these
Folk by the murky air so chastened?"
"The foremost of the troop, whose histories
Thou dost inquire," in answer thus he spoke,
"Was empress over many languages,
And by the vice of luxury so broke,
That lust to be allowance she decreed,
To quell the foul reproach that she awoke.

That is Semiramis, who, as you read,
Ruled after Ninus, and had been his bride;
She swayed the land in which the Soldans lead.
And with her comes the loving suicide,
Who broke her faith unto Sicheus' urn;
Debauched Cleopatra sails beside."
I saw there Helen, who had power to turn
Such years of time to trouble, and the great
Achilles, who to fight with love did learn.
I saw Paris and Tristram, and, I rate,
Of ghosts a thousand more he showed and told,
Whom love had sundered from our living state.
Now, when the ladies and the knights of old
I heard my doctor name, almost my brain
Was 'wildered, ruth upon me took such hold.
And I began, "Poet, with yonder twain
I crave to speak, who move in company,
And seem so light upon the hurricane."
Then he replied, "Await, until they be
More nigh, and thou shalt pray them by the love
Which them controls, and they will come to thee."

As soon as toward us on the blast they move,
I lift my voice, "O spirits harassed,
Come and speak with us here, if none reprove."
As doves that by affection called, with spread
And moveless wings to their sweet nest repair,
Through the air gliding, by volition sped;
Thus from the troop, which Dido holds, they fare,
Approaching us across the air malign,
So strong the loving call had reacht 'em there.
"O thou quick spirit, gracious and benign,
That, seeking us, the tawny air dost pierce,
Even us, who did the ground encarnadine;
Had we the Monarch of the universe
Our friend, his peace for thee should be our quest,
As thou hast pity on our pain perverse.
Whatever thou to speak and hear may list,
We will give ear to, and will speak to thee,
So long as yet the blast remaineth whist.
The land where I was born is by the sea,
Upon the margin, where descendeth Po,
With all his followers at peace to be.

Love, whom the gentle heart is quick to know,
  Seized him by that fair person, which, it grieves
Me still to think, I was despoiled of so.
Love, who from loving none beloved reprieves,
  So kindled me to work his will again,
That still, thou seest, my side he never leaves.
Love led us to one death; the place of Cain
  Awaiteth him, by whom in life we bled."
These words proceeded to us from the twain.
When I the wounded spirits heard, my head
  I hung adown, and sometime kept it low,
Until, "What thinkest thou?" the poet said.
Then I began, when I made answer, "O,
  What dear desire, what many thoughts and sooth
Have led them both unto this bourne of woe?"
I turned to them and spoke myself, "In truth,
  Francesca," I began, "thine agonies
So pierce me, I can weep for woe and ruth;
But tell me, at the time of your sweet sighs,
  How love, and by what token did concede
That you the dubious passions might surmise?"

And she replied, "There is no pain indeed
Like the remembering of happy state
In grief, nor will thy guide to learn it need;
But if such eagerness to penetrate
The first root of our love, thy mind incite,
As one that speaks and weeps I shall relate.
One day we had been reading for delight
Of Lancelot, how love had him compelled;
We were alone together, dreadless quite.
This reading many a time our eyes had held
Upon each other, and our cheeks made pale;
One only passage our endurance quelled;
For when the smile desired, in our tale,
Was kissed by such a great and loving one,
This man, who never from my side can fail,
Kissed me, all quivering, my mouth upon.
The book, the author, Pandar's trade was plying;
That evening we could read no further on."
As in that guise one spirit was replying,
The other wept so sore, my senses fled
Through pity, as if I had been a-dying;
I dropt upon the ground as drop the dead.

CANTO VI.

As mind returned, that had to cover fled
Before my pity for these cousins two,
Which me with sadness quite discomfited,
New torments, and tormented spirits new,
I see around, wherever I attain,
Wherever turn, wherever fix my view.
I stand in the next circle of the rain,
Accursed, everlasting, heavy, chill,
That never changes quality nor strain.
Great hail, and snows, and clouded water still
Go gushing down athwart the darksome air;
The land they fall upon dire stenches fill.
Cerberus, fell beast, uncouth beyond compare,
Howls like a hound, out of his threefold jaws,
Over the nation kept in water there.

His eyes vermilion are, his hands with claws,
His belly large, and black and greased his beard;
He rends the ghosts, and quarters them, and chaws.
The showers make them howl, like dogs afeared;
Each side with each protecting for its term
These wretches undevout full often veered.
When Cerberus beheld us, that huge worm
Opened his mouth, and all his teeth displayed;
No fibre in my body rested firm.
Thereat my guide spread out his palms, and made
Two handfuls large of earth, and flung them clean
Into the ravenous throats wide open laid.
And as a hound that bays when food is seen,
And ceases when his teeth have clutcht the same,
Since all for that his rage and zeal hath been;
So these ill-favoured faces now became
Of fiendish Cerberus, who behowleth so
The ghosts, that to be deaf is all their aim.
We past among the spirits, beat down low
With heavy showers, and planted every pace
On vanity, that made corporeal show.

All on the ground were prostrate in that place,
  Save one, who sat up suddenly and said
(As it beheld us pass before its face),
"O thou, who by this tract of hell art led,
  Recall to mind my aspect if thou mayst;
For thou wast formed ere I disfeatured."
I said, "The anguish thou art made to taste
  May render memory faithless to her trust,
As though thy likeness she had never traced.
But tell me what thou art, whom down here thrust
  To such a place and such a pain I meet,
That others more may wound, but scarce disgust?"
"Thy state," he said, "with envy so replete
  That ye may spill it, if the sack ye jog,
Was my abode in life's calm weather sweet;
You, fellow citizens, did call me Hog,
  Who, for the damned fault of gluttony,
Lie battered, as thou seest, in this bog.
Nor I alone sorrowful spirit be,
  For all the rest are doomed to this one pain,
For this one fault," and word no more spoke he.

I answered, "Hog, thy lamentable strain
Moves me to weeping by my sorrows' weight;
But canst thou tell, to what end will attain
The citizens of our divided state,
If any there be just, and likewise why
Such discord hath come over us of late?"
He said, "When times of turmoil have gone by,
They'll come to blood, and then the mountaineers
Shall chase the other part with contumely.
Then must they also fall within three years,
And their foes rise, by help of one who now,
From coast to coast, party to party veers.
Then shall they hold on high long time the brow,
And bend the others down with burdens rude;
Though they may rage and wail, it boots not how.
Two men are just, and they not understood;
Pride, envy, covetousness, are the three
Sparks, which have set on fire these bosoms lewd."
His lamentable strain thus ended he.
"I'd have thee tell me further," answered I,
"And with a larger parley favor me;

Where's Farinata, and the Tegghiey,
Arrigo and Rusticûtchi, I beseech,
The Mosca, and all who did their souls apply
To doing good — tell me of them and teach,
For I am nipt with sore desire to know
If heaven ensweets, or hell empoisons each."
He said, "Amongst the blacker souls below,
Weighed to the bottom by another crime,
Thou mayst behold them, if so far thou go;
But when thou art again in that sweet clime
Above, remind them of me there, I sue;
I answer not, I speak not from this time."
Then his confronting eyes he turned askew,
He leered on me awhile, then bowed his head,
And fell with it like all the blinded crew.
"They shall awake no more," my master said,
"This side the sounding of the trump of doom;
When hitherwards the adverse power hath sped,
Each must regain his melancholy tomb,
Take back his flesh and figure, and must hear
That which through everlasting time will boom."

Thus onward through the mixture foul we steer,
  Made by the ghosts and showers, with tardy gait,
On life to come discoursing somewhat here;
At which I said, "O master, from the date
  Of the grand sentence, will these torments grow
More sharp or less, or keep their present state?"
And he replied, "Back to thy science go,
  Which tells thee, as a thing is more complete,
So shall it feel more sharply weal or woe.
Although this cursed race can never meet
  The true perfection, they must greater be
Thenceforward than before, as well they weet."
So circling by that path proceeded we,
  In large discourse of things I now pass by;
We gained a stair that leads down one degree;
There the great enemy Plutus we descry.

CANTO VII.

"Papee Sathanas Aleph," thus 'gan bawl
This Plutus, with his harsh and husky speech;
At which the noble sage, discerning all,
Said to encourage me, "Let fear not reach
Thy feelings, for not all his power and might
Shall bar thy passage down the craggy beach."
Then towards the swollen lips he turned outright,
And, "Hold thy peace," he cried, "thou wolf accurst,
Consume thyself upon thy own despite.
Not without cause the cone of hell is pierced,
This thing is willed above, where Michael
Avenged the contumelious rape at first."
As when the sails, which in the wind 'gan swell,
Fall down and fold, if broken be the mast,
So to the ground this cruel savage fell.

And thus into the fourth lagoon we past,
Still trending inwards down the baleful shore,
On which the Evil of the world is cast.
Justice of God! who maketh such a store
Of pains and torments new, as I surveyed,
And why for sin must we be plagued so sore?
As by Charybdis there the wave is brayed
Upon the wave which meets it, crest on crest,
Thus to go to and fro this tribe are made.
A people more excessive than the rest
I saw, with horrid howls, from side to side
Whirling about them weights by strain of chest.
They dashed against each other, and they cried,
In turning round again with backward swing,
"Why dost thou keep, why flingest thou aside?"
Then back they turn along the noisome ring,
From every side unto the adverse part,
This canticle of scorn continuing;
Then their half-circles finishing, they start
Towards the further jousting-place anew;
At which I, almost cloven to the heart,

Said to him, "Master mine, O tell me true,
What kind of ghosts are these, and whether all
Were churchmen, whom upon the left I view,
Whose heads are tonsured?" "Each one had so small
A mind," he answered, "in his living day,
That he by measure let no money fall;
As with their voices loud enough they bay,
Arriving at the two points in the ring,
Where twofold sin drives them a twofold way.
Churchmen were these, that have no covering
Of hair on head, and popes among them be,
And cardinals, whom avarice can bring
Full oft so low." "Master, should I not see,"
Said I, "some well known faces in the train
Of those defiled by such iniquity?"
"Thy mind," he said, "compacteth figments vain.
The senseless life which made them brutes of old,
Beyond remembrance doth each face distain.
They shall eternally this tenor hold
Of double jousts, and from the grave repair,
These with clencht fists and those with heads half polled.

Ill-spending and ill-keeping from the fair
World has expelled, and set them here to moil;
The mode to deck in words I shall not care.
Consider now, my son, the shortlived coil
That's in the goods which wait on Fortune's boon,
Which do the kindreds of mankind embroil.
For all the gold that glints below the moon,
Or that has glinted, would not give repose
To one such weary spirit, late or soon."
"Master," I said, "I pray thee to disclose
This Fortune whom thou namest; what is she,
That over earthly good such empire owes?"
"O the besotted creatures," answered he,
"What ignorance is this which you offends?
Now chew the verdict, which I tender thee.
He, whose high wisdom all beside transcends,
Has made the spheres, appointing one that might
Rule over them, whence every part extends
To each, in tenor uniform, its light;
So for the glories of the world he did
One common regent and conductress take,

Who might from time to time, from seed to seed,
And place to place, their empty riches shake,
Beyond forestalling by your wit and heed.
She doth one people raise, and one doth make
To languish, by the allotment of her hand,
Which is concealed, as by the sward the snake.
Your wisdom can against her make no stand,
She judges and foresees, and aye pursues
Her sway, like every god in his command.
Her revolutions have no pause nor truce;
Her swiftness from necessity is wrung;
So many be they who for change have use.
And she it is who should on cross be hung,
As many tell, who blame her much amiss,
Where they should praise, with foul and wicked tongue.
But she is happy, hearing nought of this,
Among the glad first-born of God attending,
To turn her sphere about, and bide in bliss.
Now must we be to deeper ruth descending;
Each star is sinking, which aloft did soar
When we set out, and longer stay forefending."

We crost the circle toward the further shore,
  Above a spring, which boils and pours away
Along a moat that joineth on before.
Thence we attended by the billows grey,
  For darker far than purple they must be,
Came down and entered by an uncouth way.
A pond below, that Styx is called, we see,
  Made by this dreary brook, having descended
Under the dusky and malignant lee;
And I, that evermore to gaze attended,
  Beheld a muddy nation in this lake,
All naked and with countenance offended.
The which not only to their hands betake
  To fight, but eke to chest, and feet, and head,
And rend each other toothwise, flake on flake.
"Behold, my son," the gracious master said,
  "The souls in which did anger tyrannise,
And I would have thee take for warranted,
There is below the lake a tribe that sighs,
  And makes the surface of the waters bubble,
As thou mayst find, wherever turn thine eyes.

Set fast in slime they say, 'We lived in trouble
In that fair country which the sun makes gay,
And now we must in coal-black pool have double;
Such fumes of sloth we bore in heart alway.
This hymn they gurgle in the gullet low
With clean articulations nought they say."
Thus round about the sluggish moat we go,
Between the dry shore and the middle pit,
And gaze on them who gulp the mire below;
Eftsoons upon a tower's base we hit.

CANTO VIII.

I say resuming, that some time before
We came up fully to this tower's base,
Our eyes began the summit to explore;
At seeing two small flames take up the place,
And one, that from afar made answer fit,
As far off as the eye could hardly trace;
At which I turning to that sea of wit
Enquired, "What meaneth this, what answer gave
The other flame, and who directed it?"
He answered, "Now upon the turbid wave
Thou mayst discern what they are summoning,
If so thy sight the reeking fen can brave."
No shaft, I think, was ever shot from string,
That made such rapid way athwart the air,
As I beheld a bark, a tiny thing,

Suddenly toward us through the waters fare,
Which held a single pilot at his post,
Calling, "Now, felon spirit, art thou there?"
"Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thy shouts are lost,
This time if never more," my master said,
"Thou shalt but have us till the mire is crost."
As one that hears of great delusions played
Upon himself, which then his bosom goad,
So Phlegyas in his gathered wrath was made.
Then down into the bark my master trod,
And made me next himself to enter in,
And save by me it seemed to have no load.
As soon as both had taken seat within,
Cleaving the waters went the ancient prow,
With deeper furrow than its wont had been.
Whileas the death-informed pool we plough,
'Gan one, with mud all covered, me to hail:
"Before thy time arriving, who art thou?"
"I come, but to return I shall not fail;
But who art thou, so fulsome?" I replied.
"Thou seest," he answered, "I am one that wail."

"Then wail and weeping ever thee betide,
Accursed soul," this answer back I flung,
"For thee I know, albeit so brutified."
Then with both hands upon the bark he clung;
My wary master made him thence give room,
And cried, "Fall back the other hounds among."
His arms about my neck he threw full soon,
And kissed my face and said, "Indignant spirit,
Blessed be she that bore thee in her womb!
This was on earth a man of pride; no merit
Adorns the recollection of his birth,
And therefore must his ghost this rage inherit.
How many hold themselves high kings on earth,
That here will stand like swine in mud below,
Leaving a vile report of their low worth."
I answered him, "O master, I could so
Rejoice to see him in this broth immerst,
Ere further yet beyond the swamp we go."
"Before," he answered me, "thy sight has pierced
Unto the marge, thou shalt be well sufficed;
'Tis meet in such desire to slake thy thirst."

Within a space I saw so martyrised
This fellow by the muddy nations all,
That God the more I still have thanked and prized.
To Philip Argenti, 'gan each to bawl,
And the uncouth spirit Florentine full sore
Did with his teeth upon his own flesh fall.
We left him there, I speak of him no more;
Then smote a tone of woe upon mine ear,
At which I strain mine eye to look before.
"Now son," my gracious master said, "draws near
The city, which of Dis receives the name;
And hosts of laden citizens are here."
"Master," said I, "full surely of the same
Yon mosks within the valley I discern,
Vermilion, as if out of fire they came."
Then he replied to me, "The fires eterne,
Which inwardly consume them, show them red
As here in nether hell thine eye may learn."
And thus into the deep-hewn moats we sped,
That gird the unsolaced land on every side;
The wall it seemed was quite of iron made.

Not without making first a compass wide,
We came upon a place, where, with loud breath,
"Come out, you enter here," the boatman cried.
I saw a thousand strong, the gates beneath,
Rained out of heaven, and haughtily they said,
"What man is this who comes, exempt from death,
Across the realm and people of the dead?"
Then showed my wary master he would fain
Hold parley with them singly in my stead:
They bated something of their high disdain,
And said, "Come only thou, let him begone
Who with such daring entered our domain.
Let him go back on his fool's path alone,
And prove his wit, for thou shalt sojourn here,
That hast the darksome country to him shown."
O reader, as the accursed words I hear,
Imagine if I was discomfited,
For never to return again I fear.
"O dear my guide, who seven times," I said,
"And more, hast freed me, and my rescue won
From perils, wherewith I was compassed,

Leave me not now so horribly undone;
And if to go on further be denied,
Back let us both upon our footsteps run."
Thereat my liege, who led me there, replied,
"Be not dismayed, our passage none can bind,
For such is he, by whom 'tis certified.
But stay meantime, and thy forwearied mind
Feed with good cheer and hope; for never I
Will leave thee in the nether world behind."
So said he, and so leaveth me thereby,
My gentle sire, and I remain in doubt,
For in my head contended no and aye.
I could not hear what he to them held out,
But with them he remained not long in place,
When each one to the rescue turned about.
Our foes they shut the gate upon his face;
My master stayed without by their despite,
And turned again to me with tardy pace;
His eyes were on the ground, his face was quite
Shorn of good courage, and he said with sighs,
"Who shuts the baleful houses from my sight?

For all my wrath," he said, "be thou no wise
Afraid, for I'll within that wall subdue
The proof and muster of our enemies.
That surquedry in them is nothing new,
But was at gate less hidden showed before,
On which the scroll of death has met thy view;
It stays without a fastening evermore,
And this side of it now descends the slope,
Passing without a guard the circles o'er,
Even such a one as shall the passage ope.

CANTO IX.

My guide perceiving to return anew
The craven color, which my face had stained,
Represt the sooner his own altered hue;
Intent as one that hearkens he remained,
For little further could the eye survey,
By the dun air and gathered fogs detained.
"It shall behove us yet to win the day,"
Said he; "if not,—such help was offered us—
O how I long for one to pass our way."
I saw full plainly that he covered thus
His opening words by those that came behind,
Which with his prelude were incongruous;
But yet the speech woke terror in my mind,
By which perhaps a worse intent was thrown
Into the broken phrase than he designed.

"Adown this bottom of the dismal cone,
Comes ever any from that first degree,
Whose punishment is hope cut short alone?"
Thus I enquired; and "Rarely," answered he,
"Hath any of our number cause to go
This road by which I am conducting thee:
'Tis true that I have once been here below,
Commanded by that stern Erictho's spell,
Who could the ghosts into their bodies throw.
My flesh without me had some time to dwell,
When she within this wall did me conjure,
From Judas' zone a spirit to compel.
That is the lowest place, and most obscure
And furthest from the all-moving heaven's gyre;
Full well I know the road—of this be sure.
These marshes, that exhale a stench so dire,
Encompass the afflicted city, where
We cannot make an entry without ire."
And more he spoke, but which I could not bear
In mind, for now mine eyes had drawn me quite
To that high tower's top of ruddy glare.

I saw there in a moment shoot upright
Three hellish furies, all with gore embrowned,
Of female limbs and 'havior to the sight.
They were with greenest hydras girt around,
And snakes and horned vipers had for hair,
By which their haughty temples were embound.
Then he well knowing those that handmaids were
Unto the queen of endless misery,
Said, "Look upon the fierce Erinnyes there;
Thou mayst upon our left Megæra see,
Alecto on the right hand maketh wail,
Betwixt," he ended, "is Tisiphone."
Each of them beat and clove with palm and nail
Her bosom, calling out in such loud tone,
As made me fast beside the poet quail.
"Let come Medusa, yea, we'll make him stone,"
They shouted, gazing at our place below;
"His outrage Theseus did not ill atone."
"Turn thee about, and keep thy face down low,
For if the Gorgon come, and if thou see,
Full surely upward shalt thou never go."

So said my master, and so likewise he
  Turned me, nor only to my hands was fain
To trust, but with his own blindfolded me.
O you that sound intelligence retain,
  To scan the hidden lore do you endeavor,
Below the cover of the mystic strain.
And now there came along the turbid river
  The crashing of an uproar full of dread,
That made on either side the margins quiver;
Not otherwise than like a wind that, sped
  By the confronting heats, impetuously
Shall strike the forests, and by nothing stayed,
Break branches down, and carry flowers from tree,
  And onward proudly sweeping, dust enrolled,
Makes both the cattle and the herdsmen flee.
Then said he, loosing from mine eyes his hold,
  "Thy seeing nerve adown this ancient scum
Direct, this way that bitterest fumes enfold."
As frogs that see the hostile serpent come,
  Disperse along the waters to their holes,
Till in the ground they nestle all and some;

I saw above a thousand blasted souls
  Fly thus before the face of one, who past
Over the Styx at ford with unwet soles.
He waved in front his left hand oft and fast,
  Removing from his brow the sluggish air,
And by this travail only seemed downcast.
That heaven had sent him I was well aware,
  And my wise guide made signs I should remain
Still, and should bow my head before him there.
Ah me! how full he seemed of disdain!
  He came up to the gate, which open flew
Before his wand, that nothing could refrain.
"O you, cast out from heaven, contemned crew!"
  Thus on the horrid threshold he exclaimed,
"Why does that surquedry abide in you?
Why kick against the will that's never maimed
  Of its achievement and result, nor lopt,
And which your further bale has often framed?
Why dash at gate which destiny hath stopt?
  Your Cerberus, if this you bear in mind,
Retaineth hence his chin and gullet cropt."

Then turned he to the cloddy path behind,
Nor spoke, nor beckoned us, but semblance wore
Of one that by some care of other kind
Was nipt and gnawed, than those beside him bore.
And thus we turned our footsteps toward the land,
After these hallowed words nought fearing more,
And entered, there was no one to withstand.
Then I, desiring to behold full plain
What state of being such proud walls command,
Having arrived within, about me strain
Mine eyes, and see a vast and level zone,
All full of anguish and abhorred pain.
Like as at Arlee, where stagnates the Rhone,
Or as at Pola, the Carnaro, near
Which bathes and makes Italia's border known,
The tombs embossing all the tract appear;
So I beheld it now in every part,
Save that the manner was more savage here.
For flames were seen those monuments athwart,
Which kindled them so fervently and throughly,
That iron's needed hotter by no art.

Their lids above them were suspended duly,
And from them did such piteous wailings rise,
As seemed to come from painéd wretches truly.
"Master," said I, "what people in this guise,
Ensepulchred in every vaulted ark,
Make themselves heard with miserable sighs?
He answered, "Here is each heresiarch,
And all his sect of followers, who load
The graves much more than you would think to mark.
Here like with like is fixed in one abode;
The sepulchres are heated more and less."
He ceased, and to the right we took the road,
Betwixt the torments and high buttresses.

CANTO X.

Now wend we by a secret path confined
  Betwixt the city walls and penal fires,
My master in the front, and I behind.
"O supreme puissance, through the guilty gyres,
  Who leadest and turnest me after thy own sense,
Speak now, and satisfy my heart's desires.
This people, lying in the monuments,
  Could they be seen? the lids are now thrown by
From all, and none are set for their defence."
"They shall be all shut fast," was his reply,
  "When from Jehoshaphat they come back hither,
Taking the bodies which they left on high;
On this side is the cemetery, whither
  With Epicurus all his sect are sent,
Who make the soul and body die together.

But further, thou shalt soon have thy content
As to the question which thou utterest,
And that on which thou art in silence bent."
"Dear guide," I answered, "I have not suppress
My thought, unless from many words to abstain,
Which hath been, now and erewhile, thy behest."
"Ho, Tuscan, talking in such courtly strain,
Who treadest alive the fiery city, be
Content awhile at this place to remain.
Thy language clearly manifesteth thee
A native of that noble land, which may
Perchance have suffered too much wrong by me."
This voice all on a sudden made its way
From one among the arks, at which I drew
To my guide somewhat nearer in dismay.
"Turn round again," he said, "what wilt thou do?
Look! Farinata standeth there upright;
Down to the girdle he appears in view."
Already had I fixed on him my sight,
And he stood working up his chest and head,
As 'twere a man that scorneth hell outright.

My guide, with hands alert and spirited,
Betwixt the sepulchres impelling me,
Said, "Let thy converse there be limited."
As I arrived before his tomb's foot, he
Looked on me for awhile, then 'gan to say,
With some disdain, "What was thy ancestry?"
And I, being desirous to obey,
Kept nothing back, but showed him all things plain;
At which he raised his brows a little way,
And said, "They were fierce foes of all my strain,
And of myself, and all who took our part,
For which I scattered them once and again."
"Though scattered, they returned from every part,
Both once and afterwards," said I; "but ye
On your side mastered not so well the art."
And hereat with discovered face I see
A shade beside the former rise chin-high;
I judge that he was resting on his knee;
Who all around me looked, as to descry
If he could some companion with me find;
But when his doubts were utterly gone by,

He weeping said, "If thou into this blind
Prison-house by loftiness of soul art brought,
Where is my son? why is not he combined?"
"Not my own power," said I, "my passage wrought;
By him that waiteth yonder I am led,
Whom, it may be, your Guido held at nought."
His words and mode of punishment had read
His name to me by this time, wherefore I
Could answer him as fully as I've said.
Eftsoons he rose up with a bitter cry,
"What meanest thou by held? lives he no more?
Does the sweet light no longer meet his eye?"
Then finding I made some delay before
I answered him, right back I saw him fall;
Nor once to reappear above he bore.
But that high-minded comrade, at whose call
I there had halted, neither bowed his head,
Nor bent his flank, nor countenance changed at all.
Continuing our words, "And if," he said,
"They learnt the art but ill, this being so
Doth more afflict me than my fiery bed;

But ere that lady's face, who rules below,
Shall fifty times illuminated be,
Thou shalt the burden of the same art know.
Now as thou wouldst again the sweet earth see,
Say, why so bitterly this people act
Against my race in all which they decree."
Said I, "The slaughter, and the branding fact,
Which dyed the current of the Arbia red,
Makes them such language in our fanes enact."
Then after he had sighing shook his head,
"I was not singly there, nor should, I trow,
Without a cause have joined the rest," he said;
"But I, when all besides me could allow
To wipe out Florence from the earth, did then
Defend her singly with unflinching brow."
"So may thy seed," I said, "have peace agen,
As thou wilt disentwine the knot, which here
My judgment's utterly entangled in.
You seem to see what time is bringing near
Beforehand, if I understood aright,
But on another footing you appear

With present things." "As one that hath weak sight
We see," he answered, "things far off in fate;
So far the supreme chief affords us light:
When they come nigh or happen, out of date
Is all our knowledge; and, if none convey
The news, we nothing know your mortal state."
My master now was beckoning me away;
At which I begged the shade more hastily
To tell in whose companionship he lay.
Then he, "I with above a thousand lie;
Within here is the second Frederic,
The Cardinal, and more whom I pass by."
Then hid himself, and I to that antique
Poet retraced my steps, considering
Those words, which seemed no good for me to speak.
He then set out, and so, while journeying?
He said to me, "Why art thou so distraught?"
And I his requisitions answering.
"Bear well in mind that which thou hast been taught,"
That sage enjoined me, "though to thy dismay;
And hereof," said he pointing, "have a thought:

When thou shalt stand before the soothing ray
Of her whose lovely eye beholdeth all,
Then shall be shown to thee thy life's whole way."
Then to the left he turned, and from the wall
We parted by a narrow pathway, toward
The middle, where upon a vale we fall,
That makes, as high as here, its stench abhorred.

CANTO XI.

Upon the margin of a lofty shore,
Built with huge broken rocks that form a round,
We came above a yet severer store;
When from the stench which that abyss profound
In horrible excessiveness upthrew,
Behind the cover of a tomb I wound,
Of ample size, where hung a scroll to view,
Which saith, "Pope Anastasius I guard,
Whom out of the right way Photinus drew."
"Our steps it will behove us to retard,
That we may somewhat first inure the sense
To this vile gust, which then we'll not regard.
So spake my guide, and "find some recompense,"
I answered, "lest our time pass idly by."
"Lo, this was in my thoughts," said he, and thence

Went on, "My child, three smaller circles lie
Within those rocks, to classes different
Assigned, as those which thou hast left on high.
Accursed spirits fill their whole content;
But that thine eyes may henceforth indicate
The rest, hear how and wherefore they are pent.
All malice, which in heaven acquireth hate,
Is aimed at injury, and each such aim,
By force or fraud, must others' harm create.
As fraud is proper to mankind, the same
Offends God more, and hence in lower grade
The fraudful stand, more pain assaulting them.
All for the violent one circle's made,
But for that force affecteth persons three,
It is in three belts parcelled and outlaid.
To God, to self, and neighbours can there be
Done violence, in the persons, or the things
Of each, as thou shalt severally see.
By force a man upon his neighbour brings
Death, and sharp wounds, and works on their estate
Ruinous exactions, burnings, ravagings.

Hence homicides, and all who smite in hate,
Reavers and robbers, suffer punishment
Through belt the first, in bands multiplicate.
A man against himself is violent,
Or his own substance; therefore must all they
In belt the next without a hope repent,
Who from your world shall make a wilful way,
Who set at stake and squander land and fee,
And mourn when they have reason to be gay.
A man doth violence to the deity,
Whose heart denieth or misprizeth him,
Or spurneth nature, and her bounties free.
The less belt, therefore, sets a brand on them
Who share the sins of Sodom and Cahors,
And speakers in their hearts, who God contemn.
The fraud, at which all conscience feels remorse,
A man may use to those who shall confide
In him, or where his credit hath no force.
The former mode seems only to divide
The knot of love, which nature made whilere,
And therefore in the second circle hide

Fawners and hypocrites, and thieves are here,
Enchanters, counterfeits, simoniacs,
Pandars, embezzlers, and all such foul gear,
A man in second mode that love forsakes
Which nature gave, and that whose added store
A link of confidence peculiar makes.
And hence the inmost circle, at the core
Of the creation, by the seat of Dis,
Him that betrays consumes for evermore."
"Master," said I, "full clearly up to this
Proceeds thy speech, and draws the line among
The people and the parts of this abyss.
But tell me, those in the fat marshes flung,
By the rain beat, and by the whirlwind sped,
And those who meet with such malicious tongue,
Why are they not within the strongholds red
Chastised, if wrath of God upon them weigh?
And if not, why are they so ill bested?"
"Now what hallucination leads astray
Thy wit so far beyond its wont?" said he;
"Or whither is thy mind else turned away?

Dost thou not bear the words in memory
In which thy ethics treat the frames of mind
That heaven will not allow, in number three?
Incontinence, and malice, and the blind
Bestiality, and how incontinence
Offends God least, and brings least blame behind?
If thou regard this verdict well, and thence
Proceed to call to mind what souls are those
That up without receive their chastisements,
Thou'lt plainly see, why they in separate rows
From yonder felons stand, and by what right
God's justice pounds them with less angry blows."
"O Sun, that healest every clouded sight,
Thy solving so contenteth me," said I,
"That doubt or knowledge works me one delight.
But turn a little back, and tell me why
Thou saidst above, that usury offends
The God of goodness, and this knot untie."
"Philosophy to whosoe'er attends
Makes known," said he, "not in one only part
That Nature, in her goings-out, depends

On the divine goodness, and on his art;
And if thy physics, but a little way
From the first pages, thou wilt lay to heart,
Your art the latter follows where she may,
As pupil doth his master; whence we find
That art is God's grand-daughter, so to say.
Now if thou call thy Genesis to mind
From the beginning, it behoves man hence
To earn his living and advance his kind.
But usurers take other means, and hence
Both by herself and delegate disdain
This nature, whom they grudge their confidence.
But follow now, I would no more remain,
For now the Fishes on the horizon peep,
And quite above the north-west lies the Wain,
And far out yonder we descend the steep."

CANTO XII.

The place, where to descend this bank we drew,
Was alpine-like, and with an object blent
That every beholder would eschew;
As is that landslip, ere you come to Trent,
That smote the flank of Adige, through some stay
Sinking beneath it, or by earthquake rent;
For from the summit, where of old it lay
Plainwards, the broken rock unto the feet
Of one above it, might afford some way;
Such path adown this precipice we meet;
And o'er the broken hollow, at the brow,
Lay stretched along the infamy of Crete,
Engendered in the simulated cow;
Who bit himself on seeing us, as he
With inward rage who labours. "What, dost thou,"

Cried out my sage, "suppose thyself to see,
That great Athenian duke returned once more,
Who gave, on earth above, thy death to thee?
Aroint thee, beast, for this man by the lore
Of thy half-sister is not led below;
But he is come your torments to explore."
As when a bull receives the mortal blow
He breaketh from his bonds, and, impotent
To guide himself, goes plunging to and fro,
Thus in our sight this Minotaurus went;
At which my guide said, "Hasten to the road;
Best make, while he is raging, thy descent."
And so along these outshot stones we trode
Downwards, and oftentimes they were dispelled
Beneath my feet, from their unwonted load.
Then said he while I mused, "Thy thoughts are filled,
Perhaps, with yonder landslip, guarded by
This bestial anger, which I lately quelled.
Now I would have thee know, the first time I
Came this way downwards into nether hell,
That rock had not yet fallen from on high.

Certes not long, if I remember well,
Before he came, who did from Pluto's reign,
From the upper zone so large a prey compel,
On all sides round the deep and putrid glen
So trembled, that the universe, I thought,
Seemed struck with love; for thereby some maintain
The world has been to chaos often brought;
At which time in the ancient rock, both here
And further down, this overthrow was wrought.
But now look downwards, we are drawing near
The bloody river, wherein boileth he
Whose violence to his neighbours costeth dear."
O frantic wrath, O blind cupidity,
That spurrest us within our short life so,
And thus embrewest us everlastingly.
I saw an ample moat, and curved, as though
Its complement should all the plain embrace,
Like as my guide before had let me know;
And 'twixt the bank and it, as if to trace
A quarry, Centaurs ran with arrows dight,
As they were used on earth to ply the chase.

And suddenly they stopped, as we in sight
Arrived, and three departed from the train,
With bows and arrows chosen first aright.
And one among them cried, "Unto what pain
Are you appointed, who descend the shore?
Tell us from thence; if not, the bow I strain."
My master said, "Our answer is in store
To give to Chiron yonder presently,
Thy hasty will has wrought mischance of yore."
"Lo, that is Nessus," quoth he, prompting me,
"Who died in lovely Dejanira's quest,
And brought about his own revenge; and he
Betwixt the twain, who gazeth on his breast,
That great one is who did Achilles rear;
The other's Pholus, whom such rage possest.
Around the moat by thousands they career,
Transfixing every soul, that flinches more
The blood than suits her sin's allotment here."
Meantime towards these rapid beasts we bore.
Then Chiron took a shaft, and with its head
Threw back the beard that hung his jaws before;

And having got his large mouth clear, he said
Forthwith to his companions, "Mark not you
Yon hinder one moves that which meets his tread?
Now feet of dead men use not so to do."
By this, my master, standing by his chest,
Where his two natures to each other grew,
Replied, "He lives, indeed, and 'tis my 'hest
To show him, thus alone, this valley dun;
Our need, not pleasure, puts us on this quest.
From singing Halleluiahs went forth one,
Who did this novel charge to me commend;
No guileful ghost am I, thief is he none.
Now by that puissance, through which I bend
My steps along so wild a thoroughfare,
Out of thy company, we pray thee, send
One with us, that he may direct us where
The ford is, and upon his back convey
This man, for he's no ghost to glide the air."
Then turning to the right, 'gan Chiron say
To Nessus, "Go, and thou shalt be their guide,
And make what other bands you meet give way."

Then forth we moved our trusty guard beside
  Along the margin of the seething red,
In which the sodden spirits loudly cried.
I saw a nation that was covered
  Up to the eyes, and, "These are tyrants, who
Have dealt in blood and blows," the Centaur said.
"Here all dispiteous injuries they rue;
  Here Alexander and stern Dennis bide,
Who doleful years upon Sicilia drew.
And yonder brow that hath so dark a hide
  Is Azzolino, and the blond one here
Obizzo d'Este, who most surely died
On earth by hands unfilial." Out of fear
  I then drew closer to my guide, but he
Said, "Keep now him in front and me in rear."
Not far beyond the Centaur paused, as we
  Came over some, that upwards from the throat
Seemed from the boiling current to be free,
A spirit all apart he bade us note,
  And said, "The heart which over Thames is yet
Revered, he in God's own bosom smote."

Others I saw beyond, whose heads were set
  Above the stream, and all their chests beside,
And many known ones among these I met.
And lower thus and lower we descried
  The blood to sink, until we forded o'er
At such a depth as but the feet to hide.
"As thou hast seen this boiling heretofore
  Ever diminishing," the Centaur said,
"So I would have thee know, that more and more,
On yonder side, it presses down its bed,
  Till with itself again the river meets
Where groans have from the tyrants to be sped.
'Tis there God's justice evilly entreats
  That Attila, the scourge unto mankind,
Sextus, and Pyrrhus, and the boiling heats
For ever wash the tears, which they unbind
  From Rinier of Corneto, and Rinier
Pazzo, that so to vex the highways joined."
Then turned he, and the pool reforded here.

CANTO XIII.

Nor yet had Nessus on the further side
  Arrived, when we began to move on through
A grove in which no path could be descried.
Not green its leaves were, but of dusky hue,
  Its boughs not smooth, but gnarled and intricate;
No fruits on them, but thorns empoisoned grew.
Those wild-wood creatures which all tillage hate,
  Betwixt Corneto and Cecina, have no
Such dense and rugged holts for their estate.
Their nests on these the fulsome Harpies show,
  Who chased the Trojans from the Strophades
With dismal presage of impending woe.
Large-winged, with human throats and visages,
  Talons on feet, and feathered paunches wide,
They sadly scream above the uncouth trees.

"Before we enter further," my good guide
Began thus speaking, "learn that we now stand
In the next belt, and therein shall abide
Until we reach the fearful place of sand.
Then mark it well, and that shall be displayed
Which might some credit for my lays command."
I heard on every side a moaning made,
But none from whom it came could I perceive;
At which I halted suddenly dismayed.
I judge that he believed me to believe
These voices from among the trunks were dropt
By people that were lurking to aggrieve
Ourselves in ambush; for, "if thou hadst cropt
A twig from one of yonder plants," said he,
"The thoughts thou entertain'st would all be lopt."
Then I upon a tall and thorny tree
Put out my hand, and thence a branchlet tore,
At which the trunk cried out, "Why break'st thou me?'
And afterwards, when all embrowned with gore
It cried again, "Why rendest me? what makes
The soul of ruth to dwell in thee no more?

We have been men that now are withered stakes;
Thy hand should be more pitiful, no doubt,
If we had been the very souls of snakes."
As from a green bough, set on fire about
One end, which from the other gives a moan,
And seethes by wind that works its passage out;
Thus from the stalk both words and blood were thrown
Together, whereat I let fall the head,
And stood like one whom fear hath seized upon.
"If he could have believed," my master said,
"O wounded soul, before experiment,
That which he hath yet in my verses read,
His hand against thee never had been bent;
But your incredible and uncouth case
Led me to urge what I myself repent.
But tell us who thou art, that he, in place
Of some amends, may keep thy honor bright
On earth, his way to which he may retrace."
"Thy sweet words lure me so," rejoined the sprite,
"That speak I must, and let me not displease
If I to lengthen out my tale delight;

For I am he that whilom held both keys
Of Frederic's imperial heart, and who
Turned them, to close or open, with such ease,
As from his counsels nearly all men drew.
My glorious function I fulfilled so well
That sleep forsook me, and my life-blood too.
That whore, whose flagrant eyes yet never fell
From Cæsar's home, the deadly common foe,
And vice, that useth in all courts to dwell,
Enflamed against me every spirit so,
And flaming, they enflamed our liege august,
That my glad honors changed to dismal woe.
My soul, upon the taste of sore disgust,
Through death believing to escape from shame,
Made me to my own righteousness unjust.
But ever in my faith I was the same,
As by the roots I swear of this new tree,
To my dear liege, whom honor so became;
And if one of you shall the world yet see,
O succor my good name, which lieth prone
Still from the stroke of envious calumny."

Paused here awhile the poet, then went on,
"Now he is mute, let not the hour depart,
But ask, if thou hast more that should be known."
I answered, "Do thou ask, whate'er thou art
Most minded to believe would serve my need,
For I could not, such pity throngs my heart."
Thereon resumed he, "If the man, indeed,
Shall freely do as by thy speech enjoined,
O soul in thraldom, please thou, for his meed,
To tell us how the spirit is confined
Within these gnarls; and tell us further too,
If ever any shall such limbs unwind
Hereafter?" And the trunk then strongly blew,
And words were fashioned from this wind; to wit,
"Briefly shall answer be return'd to you.
When the infuriated soul doth quit
That flesh, whence by herself she was pluckt out,
Minos awards her to the seventh pit.
She falls into the wood, nor goes about
To choose a place, but where chance flings her she
Drops, like a grain of spelt, and there doth sprout,

And grows a sapling, and a salvage tree;
  Then feeding on her leaves, the Harpies make
Sorrow, and eke make sorrow's passage free.
We, like the rest, our mortal weeds shall take,
  Not put them on, for that may not be had
Justly by men, which they themselves forsake;
But we along the melancholy glade
  Shall drag them, and our bodies shall be hung
Each on the briar of its injurious shade."
As by the trunk attentively we clung,
  Believing he would utter somewhat more,
An uproar suddenly about us rung,
As when a man perceives the chase and boar
  To the place where he standeth making way,
By the hounds' clamor and the branches' roar.
Lo! from the coast, which on our left hand lay,
  Two rent and naked souls so fiercely sped,
That in the wood they shattered every spray:
"Now hasten, hasten, Death," the foremost said;
  But he behind, who deemed himself too slow,
Cried, "Thy legs, Lâno, not so nimbly fled

Jousting at Toppo;" and thereat, as though
His breath had failed, he suddenly fell sheer
Upon a bush, and merged into it so.
I saw the wood all swarming in his rear
With gaunt and greedy dogs, like greyhounds let
Loose from the leash, and hotly pressing near;
Their teeth upon the crouching ghost they set,
And rent him, nor let shred with shred remain,
Then bore away those limbs which smarted yet.
My guide now took me by the hand again,
And over to the ransacked bush he led,
That from its bloody breaches, mourned in vain.
"O Jacopo di Sant' Andrea," it said,
"What hast thou gained in making me thy screen?
What blame of thy bad life is on my head?"
Then, standing opposite, "What hast thou been,"
My master said, "that by so many sprays
Art blowing baleful words with blood between?"
"O souls," he answered, "that are come to gaze
On this unseemly havoc, which hath so
Dismembered me of leaves, vouchsafe to raise

And gather them the sad shrub's foot below.
That city was my birthplace, which to take
The Baptist, her first patron did forego;
For which his art perpetually shall make
Her mourn; and if there did not still remain,
In Arno's pass, one relic for his sake,
He would have made those citizens in vain
To labour, who upon the ashes spared
By Attila, rebuilded her again;
My gibbet of my own house I prepared."

CANTO XIV.

The ties of birthplace on my heart prevailing,
I took the scattered leaves from every side,
And gave them back to him whose breath was failing.
Then came we to the limits which divide
The first belt from the second belt, and where
Dread workmanship of justice was descried.
To plainly show what new scene met us there,
I say, we came above a steppe of land,
Which from its bed makes every plant forbear.
The doleful wood around it draws a band,
As her the dismal moat engirds, and here
Upon the very verge we took our stand.
The space was filled with sand, all thick and sere,
Not differing in semblance from the shore
On which the feet of Cato trod whilere.

O vengeance of the Deity, how sore
Should be the dread of thee with all men, who
Shall read the spectacle mine eyes then bore!
I saw of naked spirits many a crew,
That all were making very sore lament,
And seemed a various tenor to pursue.
Some lay on ground with faces upward bent,
And others sat with all their limbs upwound,
And others walking without ceasing went.
Those were most numerous who moved around,
And fewest they, who lying suffered woe,
But these had tongues for wailing more unbound,
Over the sands throughout with motion slow
Came down dilated flakes of fire, as where
Upon a windless Alp descends the snow.
As Alexander, in the torrid air
Of India, saw the flames above his hand
Falling unbroken to the ground, and there
Bethought him with his troops to stamp the sand,
Because they found the flame more easily
Was quelled, when unassisted by the land;

So fell that scorching shower eternally,
By which the sands were kindled at their feet,
As coals by wind, to make more agony.
For ever unreposing was the beat
Of miserable hands, that each way prest
To shake aloof the renovated heat.
"O Master," I began, "who conquerest
All save the stubborn demons that us met
Before the gates our entry to arrest;
Who is that lofty one, who seems to set
The fire at nought, and lies in stern disdain,
And seems no ripeness from the rain to get?"
Then shouted he himself, perceiving plain
That I concerning him had asked my guide:
"As I have lived, I that am dead remain;
Though Jove his artist weary, who supplied
The forked lightning which he took in hand
Incensed, and smote me on the day I died;
Or weary all the rest, band after band,
At the black smithy 'neath Mount Etna pight,
Crying, 'Stand by me, O good Vulcan, stand;'

As he hath done at the Phlegræan fight,
And hurl his bolts with all his might at me,
In his revenge he never should delight."
My guide then called out with such force, that he
Was never heard by me so loud before;
"O Capaneus, if thy pride in thee
Remains unquelled, thou art but punished more;
Except thy own despite, there is no pain
That for thy furiousness would clear the score."
He turned with blander lip to me again,
And said, "Thou seest a monarch of the seven
Siegers of Thebes, who whilom in disdain
Held, and seems yet to hold, the wrath of heaven;
But, as I said, his rancors to his breast
Are ornaments most fitting to be given.
Now come behind me, and be wary lest
Thou tread within the scorching sand, but still
Thy footsteps keep within the grove represt."
We came in silence where a tiny rill
Out of the grove gushes, but even yet
The redness of it makes my heart's blood chill.

As from the boiling well that rivulet
Comes out, which then the sinful women share,
So down among the sands this current set.
The sides and bottom of the channel were
Turned stone, as were the mounds on each side made,
By which I learnt our pass was to be there.
"Of all the scenes which I have yet displayed
From the first moment of our traversing
That gate, whose entrance is to none gainsaid,
Thine eyes have never looked upon a thing
So marvellous as yonder brook to see,
All flames above itself extinguishing."
These words were from my guide; I prayed that he
Would therefore furnish me that food to taste,
The love of which he had bestowed on me.
"In the mid-sea there lies a region waste,"
He said in answer, "which is called Crete,
Beneath whose king the world was whilom chaste;
There is a mountain in it, once replete
With leaves and springs, and Ida was its name;
Now 'tis deserted, like a thing effete.

Once Rhea for her children chose the same
  For a safe cradle, and, to hide their plight,
Had shouts made, when they cried, the noise to lame.
An old man in the mountain stands upright,
  Whose back to Damietta doth incline,
And Rome confronteth, mirror-like his sight.
His head is formed of gold, exceeding fine,
  His shoulders of pure silver with his breast,
Then copper comes, to where his limbs combine:
Below, of chosen iron is the rest,
  Only the right foot is of parched clay,
Which by his weight more than the left is prest.
All parts hereof except the gold display
  A breach, from out of which tears gush and flow,
Which gathering through this grotto bore a way.
Adown rocks tumbling to this gulf they go,
  Make Styx, and Acheron, and Phlegethon,
Then by this narrow conduit sink below,
And reach the point where more descent is none;
  Then form Cocytus-pool, which needeth here
No speech, for thou shalt see it further on."

Then said I, "If the streamlet we draw near
Begins thus in our world above the ground,
Why doth it only at this bourne appear?"
"Thou knowest," he answered me, "the place is round.
And though upon the left hand thou hast gained
Already much, as down its depth we wound,
Thou hast not through the circle quite attained;
Hence need no wonder to thy face be brought,
If aught appear which hath unseen remained."
"O master, where should Phlegethon be sought,
And Lethe? for the one thou passest by,
The other, sayest thou, from this rain is wrought?"
"Certes, thou pleasest me," was his reply,
"In all thy questions, but the former may
Be answered surely by yon ruddy fry.
Lethe thou shalt beyond this gulf survey,
Where clean to wash themselves the spirits fare
When the repented sins are put away."
He added, "Now can we no more forbear
To leave the grove; keep thou behind my feet;
The banks, which are unbrent, a path prepare,
And over them extinguish every heat."

CANTO XV.

Now bears us forward one of these hard mounds,
And the brook's fumes, which overcloud us here,
Fend from the flames the water and its bounds.
As are the bulwarks which the Flemings rear
From Cadsand unto Bruge, to stem the tide,
For still the onslaught of the floods they fear;
Or which the Paduans, by the Brenta's side,
To guard their castles and their villages,
Ere Clarentana feels a thaw, provide;
So formed in one similitude were these,
Albeit within less height and breadth confined
By their chief builder, call him who you please.
Already from the wood we had declined
So far, that I my place could not have found,
Although I had turned back to look behind.

We met a troop of ghosts along the mound
Advancing, who their eyes upon us threw,
As men may gaze, when evening hems them round
On one another, when the moon is new,
And us with such a narrowed eyelid spied,
As some old tailor might his needle do.
I being by such a family thus eyed,
Was recognised by one of them, who caught
My skirt, and, "what a wondrous thing," he cried.
And when I saw his arm to me thus raught,
I fixed mine eyes upon his aspect sere,
Till his fried countenance impeded nought
My intellect from recognition clear,
And lowering my face to his face, I
Said, "O Brunetto, master, are you here?"
"O son, be not displeased," was his reply,
"If Brunetto Latini awhile with thee
Turn back again, and let his troop go by."
"I pray with all my might, so let it be,"
Said I; "and if you'd have me sit with you,
I will, if him it please, who guideth me."

"O son," he cried, "whoever of this crew
One moment halts, must for an age lie low,
Sāns fanning off the flames that him bestrew.
But onward! I beneath thy skirts will go,
And then again to my companions wend,
Who walk and wail their everlasting woe."
I dared not from the causeway to descend
Level with him, but walked with downcast head,
As one who would with reverence attend.
"What fortune, or fatality," he said,
"Brings thee down here before thy mortal time,
And what is he by whom thy steps are led?"
"Above," I answered him, "in life's fair clime,
I had within a valley gone astray,
Before my age had yet attained its prime.
I left it but the morn of yesterday,
And back was falling, when he came in view,
Who leads me homeward by my present way."
Then said he, "If thou wilt thy star pursue,
To miss a glorious port thou needest not fear,
If in the beauteous life I judged thee true,

And had not death so shortened my career,
Perceiving heaven towards thee so benign,
I would have bid thee labor in good cheer.
But that ungrateful people and malign,
Who came at first from Fesulæ below,
And still of rock and mountain giveth sign,
For thy well-doing shall become thy foe;
And reason is, nor should the fig-tree kind
Among the bitter mountain-ashes blow.
'Tis their old fame on earth which speaks them blind,
An envious, grasping, overweening class,
From whose foul ways take heed to purge thy mind.
Thy fortune will such fame for thee amass,
That either side with hunger and with greed
Shall seek thee; far away be goat from grass.
No; let the beasts on one another feed
Of Fesulæ, and from that plant abstain,
If any such their hotbed holds indeed,
In which the sacred germ revives again
Of those departed Romans, who behind
Themselves let such a knavish nest remain."

"Ah me, if heaven had granted all my mind,"
I answered him, "you would not have been set
So soon in outlawry from human kind;
For in my heart is fixed, and pains me yet,
Your kind and dear similitude paternal,
As hour by hour, when on the earth we met,
You taught me how man makes himself eternal;
And, whilst I live, the dear thanks which I owe
Shall by my tongue have utterance diurnal.
As to my course, I write down what you show
To scan it with another text, if e'er
I reach a lady who the truth will know.
Of so much I would have you well aware,
For let but conscience chide me not, and I
Am ready, all that fortune wills to bear.
Nought new for me these tokens signify,
Let fortune turn her wheel as she's inclined
For me, and let the boor his mattock ply."
Thereat my master looked on me behind,
His right cheek o'er his shoulder having bent,
And said, "Well hearkens he who bears in mind."

Nor left I therefore talking as I went
With Ser Brunetto, and asking who might be
His chiefest comrades and most eminent?
"Of some to know is fitting," answered he,
"Our silence shall commend us on the rest,
Or time would fail for such large blazonry.
Know briefly all were scholars, who possest
Great skill in letters and great eminence;
One crime on earth polluted every breast.
Among that woe-struck herd goes Priscian hence,
And Francis of Accorso; and there might plain
Be seen, hadst thou desired such prurience,
One by the servant unto servants ta'en
From Arno's waters to Bacchilio's,
By which his ill-exerted nerves remain.
And I would tell of more, but soon must close
Our walking and our converse; for I see
A new smoke yonder which the sand upthrows;
There comes a band with whom I must not be;
I leave now my Tesoro to thy care
(Where still I live), and ask no more of thee."

Then round he turned, as fleet as though he were
Of those who for the green cloth have to run
Among the Veronese, and might have there
Past for the winning, not the losing one.

CANTO XVI.

Already where I stood was heard the drone,
Like to the murmur from a beehive sent,
Of waters falling on the under zone.
When rushing suddenly three spirits went
Out of a squadron that was passing by
Beneath the rain of savage punishment.
And toward us they advanced, and each 'gan cry,
"Halt thou that seemest, if thy garb speak true,
Some wight from our corrupted land on high."
Ah me! what wounds I saw, both old and new,
On all their bodies, which the flames engrave;
It pains me still the memory to review.
Good heed upon their shouts my master gave;
"Now pause," he said, and turned on me his face,
"For these our courtesy may justly crave.

And if it were not for the flames this place
Shoots in its evil nature, I would say
Their speed would not themselves but thee best grace."
Soon as we stayed, their ancient measure they
Resumed, and coming up with us, all three
Formed in a wheel which turned and made no way.
As boxers, oiled and stript, before they be
At blows and thrusts engaged, each other spy,
Their hold and their advantage well to see;
So wheeling round, each one of these his eye
Fixed on me, and their necks thus ever went
Against the motion of their feet awry.
"And if this crumbled region's dreariment
Make thee to scorn ourselves and scorn our prayer,"
Said one, "and our sad countenance forbrent,
Still for the fame we had thy soul may bear
To tell us who thou art, that hast no dread
The paths of hell with living feet to wear?
This man upon whose prints thou seest me tread,
Though stript and flayed he walketh, in degree
Was more exalted than thou wouldst have said;

The grandson of the fair Gualdrada, he
  Was Guidoguerra named, and wrought by hand
And counsel in his life right worthily.
The other, who behind me stamps the sand,
  Whose memory should be grateful yet, I trow,
On earth, was Tegghiayo Aldobrand.
And I, who blent with them in anguish go,
  Was Jacob Rusticûtchi, and be assured
My haughty wife 'bove all things works me woe."
Had I against the flame been then secured,
  I would have thrown myself at once between,
And that, methinks, my guide would have endured;
But burnt and roasted as I must have been,
  My ready will by fear was overborne,
Albeit my thirst for their embrace was keen.
I answered them, "'Twas surely grief, not scorn,
  That your estate into my bosom shed,
So much as can be thence but slowly worn,
When by this lord of mine such words were said
  As made me deem and understand before
That persons like yourselves were hither sped.

From your own land I come, and evermore
Have used with deep affection to attend,
And cite your honored names and works of yore.
I leave the gall and toward the sweet fruit wend,
Which my true guide hath promist shall be mine,
But to the centre I must first descend."
"Now as thy soul may rule those limbs of thine
Long time to come," he thereupon replied,
"And as thy glory after thee may shine,
Do courtesy and valor yet abide
Within our city, where they used to dwell;
Or have they utterly gone out and died?
For William Borsier, who but lately fell
Into this woe, and walks in yonder crew,
Much pains us by the tale he comes to tell."
"Thy sudden riches, and thy magnates new,
O Florence, have engendered in thee pride
And licence, which already makes thee rue."
Thus with uplifted countenance I cried,
And taking this for answer all the three
Eyed one another as the truth is eyed.

"If at no other time it costeth thee
More pains to give account," they answered here,
"O happy thou, who speakest out so free.
But if thou shalt escape these places drear,
And see the beauty of the stars again,
When to relate, I went, will be thy cheer,
O tell of us among the people then."
They ceased, and broke the wheel, and as they fled,
Their nimble feet seemed wings, nor one Amen
Before they vanished could not have been said.
And now my master deemed that we should leave
That region, and I followed as he led;
Nor did we but a little space achieve
Before the sound of waters came so near
That one could scarce another's words receive.
As the first river, which its own career
From Monte Veso holds to th' eastern shore
On the left side of Apennine, which here
Is called "still-water," on those heights before
It rushes valewards to its lowly bed,
And after Forli bears that name no more;

As at St. Benedict, high overhead,
Resounds this river, down one channel sent,
When by a thousand it might well be sped;
So found I making thunderous descent
Adown a broken rock, these waters dyed,
That would in little space mine ear have rent.
I chanced to have a cord about me tied
At this time, and therewith I once had thought
To catch the lynx with variegated hide.
This I ungirded from me now, and brought
Together in a heap coiled up, and wound
Into my master's hand, as by him taught.
Which he then, turning to the right hand round,
At some small distance from the margin threw
Directly down into that void profound.
I thought within my heart, "Now, something new
This novel signal surely should disclose,
Which so intent my master's eyes pursue."
Ah me! how cautious men should be with those
Who do not view the outward act alone,
But through the thoughts their penetration goes.

He said to me, "That will arise anon
Which I am waiting for, and to thine eye
That which thy thoughts are dreaming shall be shown."
On truth which wears the aspect of a lie
A man should bar his lips whene'er he may,
Since free from guilt he gathers shame thereby.
But, Reader, this I cannot choose but say,
And as I pen this comedy I swear,
And so may favor grace it many a day,
That I, athwart the gross and murky air,
Beheld a shape come swimming up to me,
That wonder to the gravest heart would bear.
As sometimes one that goeth down to free
An anchor, that hath firmly taken seat
In rock, or somewhat hid below the sea,
Who spreads his arms and catches up his feet.

CANTO XVII.

"Behold the beast with barbed tail so keen,
Who passes Alps, whom walls nor arms can stay,
Behold, who plagues the world with breath unclean!"
Thus to myself began my guide to say,
And therewith beckoned him to come ashore
Nigh to the marbled limits of our way.
Then hitherward that foul resemblance bore
Of fraud, and landed all his head and chest,
But to the brink advanced his tail no more.
His face to be a just man's face profest,
So seeming-gentle was his outward hue,
And like a serpent's shape was all the rest.
His arms all hairy from the armpits grew,
His back and breast, and both his flanks beside,
With rings and knosps were painted through and through:

No ground and pattern with more colors dyed
Have Turks or Tartars borne in banner ever,
Nor by Arachne have such webs been tied.
And as the wherries hang beside the river,
Partly within the water, part on land,
And mid yon guzzling Germans, as the beaver,
To wage his fishy warfare, taketh stand;
So stood that beast pernicious on the rim
Of stone, that compast and confined the sand.
All in the void his tail was left to swim,
Whose point, with deadly barb accoutred, went
As 'twere a scorpion's twining over him.
"Now," said my master, "must our steps be bent
A little sideways; now we have to steer
Where couches yonder beast malevolent."
So to the right-hand we descended here,
And ten full steps athwart the margin traced,
That from the sands and flames we might be clear.
And as we came up where the beast was placed,
A little further on the sands I saw
A nation sitting nigh the empty waste.

" That from the present zone thou mayest draw
Full profit, go thy way to yonder throng,"
My master bade me, " and observe its law.
'Tis meet thy reasonings with them be not long;
By thy return I shall bespeak," he said,
" The ministration of those shoulders strong."
And so afresh, along the extremest head
Of the seventh circle, where the wretched bands
Were sitting, unaccompanied I sped.
Their anguish gushed out from their eyes, their hands,
To rescue them, went plying to and fro,
Now from the flames, now from the glowing sands.
Not otherwise the dogs in summer go,
When stung by wasps, or gadflies, or by fleas,
When mouth or paw from side to side they throw.
Now looking on the face of some of these,
On whom the excruciating flame descended,
I could not one remembered feature seize.
But from the neck of each I saw suspended
A purse, that certain crest and colors bore,
And therein seemed their eyes' food comprehended.

And as I walked along, and looked them o'er,
I saw in yellow purse an emblem blue,
That shape and 'havior of a lion wore.
Then in the further carriage of my view
Another, ruddier than blood, I note,
That held a goose of more than cream-white hue.
And then a spirit, on whose argent coat
In azure tint a teeming sow was set,
Cried to me, "What dost thou along this moat?
Now go thy way, and since thou livest yet,
Know that my neighbor, named Vitalian,
This place upon my right-hand side must get.
I'm here with Florentines a Paduan;
Full oft they shout, until I long to close
My ear, 'Let come our sovereign lord, the man
Who three male goats upon his budget shows.'"
And at the word he writhed his mouth, and threw
His tongue out, like an ox that licks his nose.
Then fearing to provoke his anger, who
Had warned me but a little there to bide,
From these forwearied spirits I withdrew.

Already mounted I beheld my guide
Upon the back of that fell reptile, whence,
" Now be thou bold and confident," he cried.
" By such a staircase must we go down hence;
Get thou in front, and I between will sit,
That so the tail may do thee no offence."
As one who hath so nigh the chilling fit
Of ague, that with nails already white
He shivers in the shade he shrinks to quit,
Such, when those words were uttered, was my fright;
But shame fell on me from the threats he cast,
Which makes a servant valiant in the sight
Of a good lord. Upon those shoulders vast
I set myself; I would, but voice no more
Obeyed my thoughts, have said, " embrace me fast."
But he that oft had succored me before
In perilous time, soon as I'd mounted so,
Within his arms enwound me and upbore.
Then to the shape he said, " Now, Geryon, go;
Remember what new freight thou dost convey,
And make thy circuits large, thy sinking slow."

As when a bark from haven making way
  Goes backing out, so put forth Geryon there ;
But when his form on all sides found full play,
Then stretching out his tail, he turned it where
  His chest had been, and plied it like an eel,
And gathered to him 'neath his claws the air.
No greater dread, I think, did Phaethon feel
  At letting go the reins, through which the round
Of heaven was fired, as lasting proofs reveal ;
Nor Icarus ill-fated, when he found
  The melting wax displume his loins, when cried
His father, " On an ill road art thou bound,"
Than mine was, when the air on every side
  I felt, and from my prospect every show
Of substance but the savage beast had died.
He meantime circling and descending slow
  Swam on, but I perceived not that he stirred,
Save by a wind before me and below.
Already 'neath us on the right I heard
  That cataract with hideous hurly break,
And cast mine eyes and head down thitherward.

Then feared I more the swoop we had to make,
For fires I saw, and heard lamentings too,
And shrinking faster to my seat I take.
And now I saw, till then had 'scaped my view,
Our circling and descent, through the great pains
That toward us now from many quarters drew.
Like as a hawk that long on wing remains,
But when no bird nor lure appears in sight,
" Alack thou sink'st," the falconer complains—
Down comes he wearied, and his rapid flight
Throws in a hundred wheels, and sinks at last
Far from his master, filled with haughty spite;
So with us Geryon to the bottom past,
Close to the rocky precipice's foot,
And having from himself our persons cast,
Shot off, as arrow from the bow may shoot.

CANTO XVIII.

THERE is a place in hell, called Evilpits,
All wrought in stone, of iron-colored grain,
As the round barrier is in which it fits.
Full in the middle of this baleful plain
There yawns a gulf, exceeding deep and wide,
Whose government due season shall explain.
Round therefore is the space that's left outside
This gulf, within the steep so hard and high.
And vallies ten the base of it divide.
As shows the pattern laid before the eye,
In place, where many trenches drawn before
Its ramparts, to defend a fortress lie;
Such was the appearance which these vallies bore,
And like as bridges from the gates are sent
Of such a castle to the outer shore;

So from the bottom of this cliff there went
Long spurs out, over moat and mound which strook,
Down to the gulf, in which they closed and blent.
At this place, from the back of Geryon shook,
We found ourselves, and toward the left my guide
And I, who followed him, our journey took.
New misery on the right hand I descried,
New forms of torment, and tormentors new,
With which the outmost pit was well supplied.
All naked walked below the sinful crew,
Toward us the nearest outside, after us
The furthest came, but longer strides they drew.
The Romans, from the multitudinous
Assemblage, in the year of jubilee,
To pass their bridge have taken order thus;
For as, on this side, every face you see
Is toward the castle, on St. Peter's set,
On that side all to face the mount agree.
At stations on the rock's dun parapet,
Armed with great lashes, horned fiends recurred,
Who cruelly their hinder quarters beat

Alack at the first blows how soon they stirred
  Their stumps, and not a single one who past
Would tarry for the second, or the third.
As here I went along, I haply cast
  My view on one who made me forthwith say,
"On that face I've already broke my fast."
And so to recollect I made some stay,
  And my dear guide too halted, and allowed
That I retraced a little of our way.
Thereat to hide himself the scourged one bowed
  His countenance, but it served in little stead;
"O thou with downcast eyes," I cried aloud,
"If those be not false colors thou hast spread,
  Caccianimico is thy name; but how
To such a smarting bridewell wast thou led?"
He answered, "I unwillingly avow;
  But thy clear accents have so fresh an air
Of the old life, that they constrain me now.
'Twas I persuaded Ghisola the fair
  The Marquis's lewd pleasure to obey,
Whatever shape the unseemly tale may wear;

Nor weep I here the sole Bolognian; nay,
The moat holds rather of them such good store
That fewer tongues this moment use to say
'Sipa,' 'twixt Reno and Saveno's shore.
If proofs or witnesses must be displayed,
Recal our avaricious hearts of yore."
As he was speaking yet, a Demon laid
His lash upon him, saying, "Get thee gone,
Pandar! we've here no women of the trade."
Then to my escort I returned anon,
And having but a few steps trod, we found
A rocky spur, which to the cliff joined on.
Then to the right we turned us halfway round,
And lightly mounting on the splintered cope,
We parted from that everlasting bound.
Arrived above the breach that yawns to ope
A passage for the scourged ones, "Now remain
Here," said my guide, "and cast thine eye aslope,
To front that other miscreated train,
Of whom thou hast not yet beheld the face,
As they have with us one direction ta'en."

Thus from the ancient bridge we marked the race
That toward us from another quarter sped,
And whom the scourges in like manner chase.
My gracious guide before my asking said,
"Yon great one that approaches us behold,
That seemeth not a tear for pain to shed!
How much he keeps his royal port of old!
Lo! Jason, who made nerve and brain prevail
To spoil the Colchians of the fleece of gold.
He at the isle of Lemnos lowered sail,
When the bold, mercy-lacking women there
Had given up to slaughter every male;
And by his tokens and his speeches fair
Beguiled Hypsipile, young maid, by whom
The others all before deluded were,
And left her then forlorn with laden womb;
This crime condemns him to this chastisement,
And for Medea's vengeance serves his doom.
All walk with him who cheat with like intent;
And this much for the foremost valley may
Suffice, and those who by its fangs are rent."

Already came we, where the narrow way
  Uniteth crosswise with another mole
The groundwork of a second arch to lay.
From thence we heard a tribe in the next hole
  That whines, and from the snout shudders and blows,
And slaps and paws itself without control.
Over the banks a slimy coating grows,
  That's by the effluvia from below sustained,
Offensive to the eyes alike and nose.
The bottom was so murky that we gained
  No point of view till o'er the arch we strode,
To where the rock its greatest height attained.
There having climbed, the ditch beneath us showed
  A people in such ordure sticking fast,
As seemed from human privies to have flowed;
And as mine eye exploring through them past,
  I saw one head so grimed with excrement,
That whether he with church or laymen classed
Was unapparent. "Why art so intent,"
  He bawled, "on me in all the beastly sty?"
"Because," I said, "if memory represent

The truth, I've seen thee once with hair quite dry,
And thou'rt Alexius Intérminey
Of Lucca, therefore draw'st thou most mine eye."
Then smiting on his pate, he answered me,
"It is my flatteries have sunk me here,
Of which my tongue has never once been free."
My guide said not long afterwards, "Now peer
A little forward, till upon thy sight
The countenance may fall direct and clear,
Of yonder foul, dishevelled, girlish wight,
Who scrapes herself with fingers ordurous,
Now squatting on her hams, and now upright.
Thaïs the harlot is, who answered thus
Her paramour, that asked, 'Am I in great
Favor with you?' 'In favor marvellous.'
And so far to have seen our eyes may sate."

CANTO XIX.

O Simon Magus! O his proselytes
  Wretched, who things divine, that should be mated
With goodness, in your grasping appetites
For gold and silver have adulterated!
  For you the trumpet now must wake its blast,
Since you are in the third pit separated.
Already o'er the following tomb we'd past,
  So far along the rock, a plumb-line there
Would just midway across the moat be cast.
O Supreme Wisdom, how much skill declare
  Thy works in earth, and heaven, and hell's profound,
And how thy wisdom deals to each his share!
I saw along the margins and the ground
  Thick holes, that all the tawny rock disguise,
Of like dimensions and in figure round.

They seemed not smaller nor of ampler size
Than those my beautiful St. John's can show,
Made for the priests to stand in who baptize;
One out of which I broke, some years ago,
(And by this token let all minds be cleared,)
To save a boy that would have drowned below.
Above the mouth of each a sinner reared
His feet, and so much of his legs as went
Before the calf, and nought besides appeared.
Along the soles of every one was sent
A flame, that made them so to plunge and fling,
That any cords or withes it would have rent.
As fire, enkindled on some unctuous thing,
Only the very top and surface laps,
So this from toe to heel went flickering.
I said, "O master, who is he that snaps
His feet up with more rage than all the rest,
And whom a flame of deeper crimson saps?"
"Adown yon bank," said he, "that's more deprest,
If thou art willing to be borne, then he
Shall tell, what name he lived by and transgrest."

"Thy pleasure," I replied, "most pleaseth me,
Thou art my lord and knowest things unsaid,
And know'st I swerve not from obeying thee."
Then toward the mole, that's fourth in place, we sped,
And turned, and on the left went down the bank
Into the narrow valley's rifted bed.
Nor did my gracious master from his flank
Depose me yet, but led me where the ghost
Was niched who so lamented with his shank.
" O thou that holdest thy top undermost,
Like planted lance," I shouted, " speak with us,
Sad spirit, if thy utterance be not lost."
I stood as one who shrives a treacherous
Assassin, for his living burial dight,
Who calls him back to keep the death off thus.
" Art thou already standing there upright,
Already there, O Boniface?" he cried;
" My book then by some years deceived me quite;
Art by that wealth already satisfied,
For which thou didst not fear to take with lies,
And then to pillage her, the lovely bride?"

At this I grew as those who can't surmise
The sense of things replied to them, who stay
As if bemocked, nor answer can devise.
Then Virgil bade me, "Tell him, tell straightway,
I am not who thou takest me to be;"
And I said that which I was charged to say.
The spirit wrenched his feet then violently,
And sighing, and with lamentable tone,
Said, "Then what is it which thou seek'st of me?
If what I was concerns thee to be shown
So much, that thou the bank hast therefore quitted,
Know that I put the sacred mantle on;
And well to be the she-bear's son was fitted,
So greedy to promote the whelps, that I,
My pelf above, self here to purse committed.
Down there beneath my head the others lie,
Along the rocky fissure cowering all,
Who went before me working simony.
And thither shall I likewise have to fall,
When he is come, for whom I took thee first,
The moment when I made the sudden call:

But longer is the time I've been immerst,
And borne my heels above my head, and fried,
Then he shall stand with ruddy feet reverst.
For after him, with works more darkly dyed,
Will come a shepherd from the westward land,
That's fit to cover him and me beside.
In him shall Maccabean Jason stand
Renewed, and like the king whom Jason had,
So France's unto this man shall be bland."
Hereon I may have been too bold and mad,
Perhaps, when I replied in strains like these,
"Pray tell me now what price our Master bade
St. Peter yield him, ere he gave the keys
Into his keeping; nay, but sure he said,
'Follow thou me,' and asked none other fees.
Nor Peter nor the rest with Matthew pled
For gold or silver, when upon him fell
The lot that wicked one had forfeited.
Then stay down there, for thou art punished well,
And keep the money close that ill was gained,
That made thee so against king Charles to swell;

And were it not that I am still refrained,
By reverence for the keys of supreme grace,
That thou hast in the pleasant life retained,
I'd find still harsher words not out of place,
Because your avarice makes the world to grieve,
Trampling the good and lifting up the base.
You shepherds did the Evangelist perceive,
When she, that on the waters keepeth state,
Appeared in whoredom to the kings to cleave,
She that had sevenfold heads congenerate,
And the ten horns in her approval told,
So long as virtue satisfied her mate.
Ye've made you gods of silver and of gold,
And from the idolators how differ ye?
By serving more than they a hundredfold.
O Constantine! what evil do we see,
Not from thy faith, but from that dowry sprung,
Which the first wealthy pontiff had from thee?"
Such were the notes that over him I sung,
When or by anger or by conscience prest,
Full violently with both his feet he flung.

I trow I pleased my master, he confest
In every feature ever such content,
To hear the words I voiced from Truth's behest.
And therewith round me both his arms he bent,
And quite upon his breast when I was cast,
Remounted by the way of his descent;
Nor yet was wearied, clasping me so fast,
But thus unto the bridge's top he strode,
That from the fourth unto the fifth mole past;
And thereon laid he softly down his load,
Full soft above the untrimmed and craggy cope,
That would have made for goats an uncouth road;
Then did another vale before us ope.

CANTO XX.

Now to new pains must I accord my verses,
And matter for the twentieth canto strew
Of my first lay, which the submerged rehearses.
Already had I wholly fixed my view,
The depth of that uncovered gulf to sound,
That sheddings of distressful tears embrew.
Then saw I people through that valley round
Advance, in weeping silence, at the pace
That men chaunt litanies above the ground;
And lower down as I discerned the place,
They all appeared distorted wondrously
Betwixt the chin and bosom; for the face
Of each one from the reins was turned awry,
And backwards it behoved them to proceed;
For none in front had power to cast his eye.

A man by force of palsy may indeed
Have so been wrung throughout against the grain,
But I've not seen, nor is't within my creed,
O Reader, an' if God will have thee gain
Fruit from thy study, let thy own heart show
If dry-faced any more I could remain,
When near me I beheld our image so
Distorted, that their eyes the tears allow
Adown their backs into the cleft to flow.
I wept most surely, pressing with my brow
A crag, that from the rugged rock extends,
Till my guide said, "Like all the fools art thou!
Here liveth piety when pity ends;
Can any man be guilty more than he
Whose bias with the doom of God contends?
Lift up thy head, lift up thy head, and see
For whom the earth was opened, making call
The Thebans, 'Why dost from the battle flee,
O Amphiaraus? whither wilt thou fall?'
And shattering down he went without a stay
To Minos, who takes iron hold on all.

See him his shoulders for his breast display;
Because he wished to see too far before,
He now recoils, and makes a backward way.
See Tiresias, who altered shape of yore,
When he a female from a male became,
Exchanging all the limbs that erst he bore;
And needed with his wand to strike the same
Entwined serpents yet a second blow,
Ere he the down of manhood could reclaim.
See Aruns at his chest behind him go,
Who 'mid the Luni mountains, whereon moil
The Carrarese, that make their homes below,
Encaverned in the alabaster soil
His dwelling-place, whence of the ocean wide
And of the stars nought could his prospect foil.
And she, who veils her paps, though undescried
From this part, with her falling untrimmed hair,
And carries all her down on yonder side,
Was Manto, who through many lands did fare,
Then came at last on that which gave me birth;
Of which now hear me for awhile declare.

As soon as from her father life went forth,
And as the city of Bacchus grew enthralled,
This damsel wandered long upon the earth.
A lake far up in fair Italia, called
Benâco, lies at foot of the Alp, whereby
The German frontier of Tyrol is walled.
From Garda to Camonica there fly
At least a thousand springs down Apennine,
That lake's reposing waters to supply.
A place is there, upon the frontier-line,
At which the Bishop of Verona, Trent,
Or Brescia, should he pass, the cross might sign.
Peschiêra, stout and goodly muniment,
Confronts the Brescians and the Bergamese,
Where greatest is the enclosing land's descent.
Down thither so much of the water flees
As from his lap Benâco needs must throw,
And turns a river 'twixt the verdant leas.
As soon then as the current 'gins to flow,
'Tis not Benâco called, but Mincius,
Down to Governo, where it blends with Po.

It finds before it long has wandered thus
A level, where it spreads and forms a fen,
And oft in summer grows pestiferous.
And there the unmellowed virgin passing then,
Found in the midmost of the swamp a space
Of tillage bare, and tenantless of men.
There flying all resort of human race,
Her arts among her slaves she stayed and plied,
And lived, and left her body's vacant case.
There afterwards the men, that occupied
Around her, gathered at a place they sought
For strength, as girt with marsh on every side.
Their city over those dead bones they wrought,
Which they from her, who chose at first the seat
Called Mantua, nor of other omen thought.
Its dwellers were more numerous, I weet,
Before yet Casalodi's madness there
From Pinamonte bore the gross deceit.
Now shouldst thou find men otherwise declare
My city's origin, I admonish thee
To let no falsities the truth impair."

"Master," said I, "thy reasonings are to me
So sure, and on my faith take hold so fast,
That all the rest like mere dead coals would be.
But tell me of the tribe that cometh past,
If thou see any worthy to be known,
For wholly now on these my mind is cast."
"That one," he answered me, "whose beard is thrown
Down from his cheek upon his shoulders swart,
He when the land of Greece was left so lone
Of males, that scarce the cradles came not short,
Was augur, and with Calchas omens drew
For the first cable cut in Aulis port.
Eurypylus his name was, whereof too
In some part sings my lofty tragedie,
As thou well knowest, knowing it all through.
And that one in the waist so slender, he
Was Michael Scott, who without question went
Through all the game of fraudful glamorie.
See Guy Bonatti there, and see Asdent,
Who now by awl and leather would have stayed
Full gladly, but too late he doth repent.

See caitiff women, that aside have laid
  Distaff, and needle, and spindle, and have ta'en
Their herbs and wax to ply the witch's trade.
But follow now, for with his faggots Cain
  Already toward Seville draws nigh the bound
Of the twin hemispheres, and foots the main,*
And yesternight exact the moon was round;
  Well mayst thou recollect, for hence thou didst
Receive no scathe within the wood profound."
So spoke he, and proceeded in the midst.

* The Man in the Moon!

CANTO XXI.

Thus past we, talking matters which to name
In numbers shall my Comedy not cark,
From bridge to bridge, and on the summit came,
When I remained another cleft to mark
Of Evilpits, and other fruitless woes,
And I beheld it marvellously dark.
As in the arsenal of Venice shows
The clammy-boiling pitch, when they careen
Their ships unsound, that from the seas repose
In winter, and through all the space between,
One man rebuilds his vessel, one completes
The ribs of that which many a cruise hath seen,
One man at prow, at poop another beats,
And one the mainsail, one the jib renews,
One shapeth oars, another twineth sheets;

So, not by fire, but by God's art abstruse,
A thick slime here was boiling, which the twin
Banks of the moat in every part englues.
I saw it, but I only saw therein
The bubbles which the boiling raised, and all
The surface heaving up, and settling in.
As there I pryed intently, with a call
Of "Look, oh look," my master drew me quite
Towards him from where I stood: I therewithal
Turned round, as does a man who craves the sight
Of that which it behoveth him to flee,
When valour is dislodged by sudden fright,
And nought, for looking back, delayeth he
To start; then I beheld a black fiend beat
The rock behind us running. Woe is me!
How dreadful seemed his countenance to meet,
And with his port what savageness he blent,
With outspread wings, and lithe upon his feet;
His shoulder, which was sharp and eminent,
A sinner loaded with his haunches twain,
And he the ancles in his clutches pent.

"O Evilarms" he cried, "of this domain,
I've one of Santa Zita's elders here;
Down with him, for I'm visiting again
That city which has plenty such like gear.
There all embezzle, by Bonturo's leave;
There money shall make yea for nay appear."
Then plunged him downward, and along the reef
Of adamant he turned, and never hound
Shot off so rapidly at heels of thief.
The other sank, and came up, turning round;
But all the fiends cried out, who lurked below
That bridge, "Here is no Sacred Countenance found;
Here swim you not as in the Serchio;
And therefore if thou wouldst not feel our hooks,
Take heed above the slime to make no show."
They stuck him with above a hundred crooks,
And cried, "Here under cover must thou skip,
And purloin, if thou canst, unseen." The cooks
Thus make their underlings with forks to dip
Into the caldron cleanly down their meat,
That floating it may never show its tip.

"Now," my kind master said, "that none may weet
Of thy being here, go down and crouch, I say,
Behind a crag, that offers thy retreat
Some cover, and for no offence which they
May do to me, be thou discomfited,
For I've beforehand been in such a fray,
And know my field." Then o'er the bridge's head
He stept, and toward the sixth mole when he bent,
To need a bold brow might he well be said.
For with like tempest and embitterment,
As dogs rush out upon the vagrant, who
Halts suddenly, on asking alms intent,
From underneath the bridge the demons flew,
And turned upon him all their forks; but he
Cried out to them, "Be murderous none of you.
Before a single hook lay hold on me,
Let one come out in front and hear my tale,
And then about harpooning me agree."
They shouted all, "Go forwards, Eviltail."
Then started one, while halted all beside,
And came up saying, "What shall this avail?"

"And think'st thou, Eviltail," my guide replied,
"To see me here, so far down having trod
Through all your muniments unterrified,
Sāns favoring fate, and sāns design of God?
Now let me pass, for 'tis in heaven's will found,
That I should show a man this wild-wood road."
Those words did his presumption so confound,
That by his feet he let his pitchfork fall,
And bade the rest, "Now let him bear no wound."
"O thou that sit'st," I heard my master call,
"Among the splinters of the bridge so still,
Come back to me, and fear not now at all."
I rose, and hasted up with all my skill,
At which the fiends advancing in a row,
I feared they would the treaty not fulfil.
I've seen the troops out of Caprona go
On terms, affrighted thus, when on the spot
They found themselves with foemen compast so.
Then close and closer to my guide I got
With all my person, nor could ever pick
My face from theirs, which comforting was not.

They lowered all their forks, and, "Shall I prick
Him on the crupper?" each to other cried,
And answered forthwith, "Aye, and make it stick."
But the fiend, with my master occupied
In converse, turned him quickly round and said,
"Abide at peace, Scarmileo, abide;"
And then to us, "No further can ye tread
By this reef, seeing that the sixth arch lies
All shattered under to the valley's bed.
And if you must pursue your enterprise,
Proceed along this bank, for you are near
A passage, which another reef supplies.
Yesterday, when 'twas five hours later here,
Completed, since the road upon that line
Was broke, twelve hundred six and threescore year.
I am sending yonder from this gang of mine
To see if aught looks up, whom you indeed
May go with, for they shall not be malign.
Now Alicline and Calcabrine, proceed,
And thou, Cynopus," he began to say,
"And Barbacrespa may the tithing lead.

Let Libicoccus come, and Draconay,
Come Mammockhound, Chœroides with his tushes,
Mad Rubicaunt and Farfarell away.
Go you, and search around the boiling slushes,
And safe let these up to the next ridge be,
Which over all the moats unbroken pushes."
"O master," said I, "what is this I see?
In God's name, go unguarded, if we mean
To go at all, but never go for me.
If thou art still as deft as thou hast been,
Dost see not how they grind their teeth, and make
Threats with their brows to work us woe and teen?"
He answered me; "I will not have thee quake,
And let them grind their teeth to heart's content,
They do it for the scalded wretches' sake."
Then turned they and along the left mole went,
But each had for a gibe his tongue confined
Betwixt his teeth, and toward his captain bent,
And he had blown his trumpet from behind.

CANTO XXII.

I HAVE pardye cavaliers to break
  Their camp up, make assault and pass review,
And sometimes to retreat for safety's sake;
I've seen, O Aretines, fleet chargers through
  Your land, and foragers, and I could tell
Of runners at the tilt and tournays too,
Sometimes by clarion, and sometimes by bell,
  By roll of drum, and cresset-flame on tower,
And native and outlandish signs as well;
But never have I seen to start a power
  Of horse or foot by such an uncouth blare,
Nor ship by star nor landmark to this hour.
As forward with the fiendly ten we fare—
  O dread society! but a man shall go
With sots in tavern, and with saints at prayer—

All on the slime my view was fixed, to know
The full extent and fashion of the pit
And of the people, that consumed below.
As dolphins, who their arched backs commit
To air, forewarning mariners that they
To bring their ship to port should use their wit,
So would a sinner sometimes, to allay
His torment, show his back above, and then
Snatch it, within a lightning-flash, away.
And as the frogs, in waters of a fen,
Stand by the very verge, with mouths descried,
And feet, and thicker parts concealed from ken,
So stood the sinners here on every side,
And so, at Barbacrespa's drawing near,
Did all beneath the boilings quickly hide.
I saw, and still I shudder from the fear,
One wight remain, as oftentimes may stand
One frog, the while another getteth clear;
And Mammockhound, who nearest was at hand,
Enforked him by the agglutinated hair,
And like an otter hoisted him on land.

I knew the names of all now, with such care
I noted them at first, when singled out,
And called by one another when they were.
"O Rubicaunt, wilt thou not set about
To place thy claws upon, and flay him?" So
Cried all at once that ever-damnèd rout.
"O master mine," said I, "find means to know,
If thou art able, who this wretch may be,
Thus fallen upon the mercies of his foe?"
Thereat my guide approached him speedily,
Demanding who he was. "My birthplace lay
Within the kingdom of Navarre," said he:
"My mother placed me in a seignior's pay,
A ribald having got me, who well nigh
Had ruined her of every staff and stay.
Then in the good king Tibault's household I
Held office, and to trucking there applied,
For which I give account in yonder fry."
Hereat Chœroides, who on either side
His muzzle showed a tusk, as do the swine,
Made him to feel one, how it scarified.

That mouse had fallen among such cats malign!
But Barbacresp his arms about him threw,
And cried, "Stand off, whilst I the man entwine;"
And then upon my master turned his view;
"Ask now," he said, "if thou wouldst have him show
Aught else, before the rest shall him undo."
"Then tell me, dost among the caitiffs know,"
Said he, "some others of the Latian seed
Beneath the pitch?" "I left not long ago,"
He answered, "one man from a neighboring breed,
So were I once more with him out of sight,
For neither hook nor talon would I heed."
Then Libicoccus crying, "Too much spite,
We suffer," caught an arm of him between
His prongs, and carried off the joint outright;
Then Draconay would at his legs have been
For his part, but their captain over ten
Turned round about with much misliking mien.
When they were somewhat quieted agen,
To him that his own wound was eyeing still
My master said without delay, "What then

Was he from whom thou tookest leave so ill
For thy behoof, it seems, to land abroad?"
"The monk Gomita," said he, "'twas my will
To name, Gallura's regent, of all fraud
Vessel, who had his master's foes fast bound,
And used them so that each his luck may laud.
He took their fees, and left them safe and sound,
So tells he, and in other functions too
He trucked on princely, not on petty ground.
With him consorts Don Michael Zanchi, who
Had Logodore, and their tongues never ache,
The topic of Sardinia to renew.
O see how that one's grinning; I could make
Mention of others, but my fears prevent,
Lest he be coming up my scurf to rake."
Then their great chief towards Farfarello bent,
Whose eyes, to strike, like full-moons opened were,
And cried, "Fall back, thou bird malevolent."
"If you have any wish to see or hear,"
Began again the wretch with fearful face,
"Tuscans or Lombards, I will bring them near,

But let the Evilarms keep off a space,
That these may nought of their revenges dread,
And I then, sitting in this very place,
Will bring full seven up in my single stead,
When I shall whistle, as we use to do,
If any one is putting forth his head."
His muzzle up at this Cynopus threw,
And nodded, "Here's a malice to devise,
That under he may fling himself anew."
Then he, as one well stored with strategies,
Said, "Too malicious must I be outright
To earn more sorrows for mine own allies."
Then Alicline forbore not, but in spite
Of the rest said, "If to descend thou hope,
I shall not gallop for thee, but my flight
Shall warp above the pitch; leave we the cope,
To see if thou wilt put us ten to shame,
And take the start and vantage of the slope."
O good my readers, hear a novel game!
Each fiend to turn away his eyes agrees,
He soonest that most rawly to it came.

Then taketh well his time the Navarrese,
Sets fast his feet on ground, and with a spring
Shoots off, and from their scope his person frees.
Then each one of his error felt the sting,
But chiefly he that led the rest astray,
Who flew and said, "I've caught thee," triumphing
To small effect; for wings could not convey
So swift as terror; down the other went,
And he still flying tacked his front away.
So dives the duck beneath his element,
When toward him swoops the hawk, who turns about
From the pursuit, embittered and outspent.
But Calcabrine, indignant at the flout,
Chased after him, in the successful flight
Rejoiced, that he might pick a quarrel out.
And since the embezzler now was out of sight,
He turned his claws against his comrade's brow,
And grappled with him o'er the moat in fight.
But the other proved a good goshawk enow
To claw him thoroughly, and so the twain
Fell in the midmost of the scalding slough.

Full soon the heat dissevered them again,
But power in them was none to rise up thence,
The pitch such hold upon their wings had ta'en.
But Barbacresp and all by these events
Much grieved, made four to fly from yonder coast,
Their forks in hand, who with all diligence,
One here, one there, descending to his post,
Their hooks unto the limèd fiends supplied,
Of whom the scum already had made a roast,
And in the task we left them occupied.

CANTO XXIII.

All silent, unattended, and alone,
We journeyed, one in front and one behind,
As two Franciscan brethren might have gone.
On one of Æsop's fables had my mind
Been turned, by reason of the present fray,
Where mention of a mouse and frog we find,
For not so much alike are aye and yea,
As that event to this, if you collate
Original and end, with still survey:
And even as thought from thought may pullulate,
There sprang out of my first another thus,
Which made my former terrors doubly great.
I thought to this effect, "These fiends for us
Are flouted, with such scathe and scorn to bear
As vexes them no doubt in overplus.

If wrath accrues, and evil will is there,
They'll be pursuing us with more despite
Than hound, already snapping after hare."
Then felt I all my flesh to creep from fright,
And said, intently gazing towards the rear,
"O master, if thou take not out of sight
Thyself and me full soon, I sorely fear
Those Evilarms, we have them on our wake,
I fancy them so keenly that I hear."
"If I were leaded glass, I should not take,"
Said he, "so suddenly thine outward frame,
As I enmarble now thy fancy's make.
Thy very thoughts among my own just came,
All uniform in 'havior and in face,
Whence I have made one counsel of the same.
If we can reach the further chasm, in case
The right hand bank affordeth some descent,
We shall escape the imaginable chase."
He scarce had given advice to such intent,
When I beheld them come with wings displayed,
Not far behind, upon our seizure bent.

My guide a sudden hand upon me laid,
As when a mother, wakened by the rout,
Beholds the flames her neighborhood invade,
She taketh up her child, and rusheth out,
Nor tarries, paying him far more regard
Than self, to don a single shift or clout;
And from the summit of that causeway hard
His back adown the pendent rock he cast,
By which a side of the next chasm is barred.
Through conduit water never yet so fast
To turn the wheel of inland mill has run,
Though close above the ladles having past,
As down that rocky slope my master won
His way, and me upon his bosom sped,
No longer like a comrade, but a son.
His feet had scarcely touched the valley's bed,
When I beheld them all upon the hill
Right over us, but in him was no dread.
Because the same high providence, whose will
Them for the vassals of the fifth moat meant,
Of thence departing took from them all skill.

There underneath a painted nation went
Around, around, with steps exceeding slow,
Weeping, with aspect wearied and outspent.
Mantles they had, with capes that hung down low
Before their eyes, of just the pattern seen,
If at Cologne among the monks you go.
All gold they were without of dazzling sheen,
But inward massy lead, in whose compare
Our Frederic's pressers would like straw have been ;
O tedious mantle for eternal wear!
We turning towards the left again our face
With them, to their sad wailings gave our care.
But from the burthens this forwearied race
Came on so tardily, that we had new
Companionship in lifting every pace.
I said, "O master, find among them who
Is known by eminence of name or deed,
And round thee gazing thus, thy way pursue."
Then one, who to my Tuscan speech gave heed,
Called to us from behind, " Your feet refrain,
Ye who the dun air traverse with such speed ;

Thy wish from me thou haply mayst obtain."
Thereat my master toward them turning, "Stay,"
Said he, "and then at their pace move again."
I halted, and saw two in face display
Great eagerness of heart to reach my side,
But them the weight withheld, and narrow way.
When they came up, full crookedly they spied
My person, ere a single word they spoke,
Then turned to one another round and cried,
"This nearer one seems living yet by stroke
Of lungs, and were they dead, what favor here
Could leave them lightened of the crushing cloak?
O Tuscan, that of hypocrites austere
Hast reached the college," unto me they said,
What man thou art, begrudge us not to hear."
"In that great city I was born and bred,"
Said I, "that stands on Arno's goodly river,
And in the flesh I had of old I tread."
'But what are you, adown whose cheeks for ever
I see such sorrowful distilment flow,
And of this glint what anguish is the giver?"

"These cowls," he answered me, "of orange glow
Are charged with lead, whereby the balances
Are by the weights on them set creaking so.
For us, we were boon friars, and Bolognese,
He Loderingo called, I Catalane,
Both whom thy city took to guard her peace,
As first a solitary man was ta'en,
And even such we proved ourselves to be,
As tokens i'th' Gardingo still remain."
"O friars," I began, "your misery ——"
But said no more, for on my view there burst
One crucified on ground with rivets three,
Who writhed all over when he saw us first,
Fluttering with sighs his beard which seeing, said
The friar Catalane, "That spirit pierced
On whom thou gazest, by his counsels led
The Pharisees expediently to lay
Pains for the people on a private head.
Now stript and strained athwart the general way
As thou beholdest, must he prove and try
The rest, before each passes, what they weigh.

Like pains must his wife's father too abye
Elsewhere, and all who in that conclave blent,
Which sowed the Jews a seed of misery."
Then saw I Virgil wonderingly bent
Over this man, that on his cross was bound
So basely for eternal banishment.
Then he the friar addressed in suchlike sound
As this: "Be pleased, if you are free, to tell,
Can any pass upon the right be found,
Through which we may go hence, and not compel
The black-hued angels there to intervene,
And lift us from the bottom of this dell."
He answered, "Nearer than thou mightest ween
A crag, that from the outer wall is thrown,
Extendeth, vaulting every curst ravine,
But breaks and forms no cover here alone;
There may you mount the ruin, which is shed
Slant down the side and 'cross the bottom strown."
My guide he stood awhile with downcast head;
"Ill have we been instructed otherwise
By one that yonder sinners hooks," he said.

"I've at Bologna heard," the monk replies,
"Faults of the fiend enow, from which I knew
That he is false, and father unto lies."
Hereat my guide with longer strides withdrew,
By anger somewhat clouded in his cheer,
And so departing from the burthened crew,
I followed of his feet the footsteps dear.

CANTO XXIV.

About that season of the stripling year,
When the sun with Aquarius trims his rays,
And now the nights to halve the day draw near;
When the hoar frost upon the ground displays
The perfect semblance of her sister white,
But of her plume not long the fashion stays;
The poor and garment-lacking peasant-wight
Arising looks abroad, and sees the ground
All blanched, thereat his flank he 'gins to smite,
Comes home, and wanders moping round and round,
Abject, like one that knows not what to do,
Then sallies out, with stocks of hope new-found,
Perceiving that the world has changed its hue
In that short while, and takes his rod in hand,
And drives his flock to browse the field anew;

So by my master was I first unmanned,
When I beheld his countenance clouded o'er,
And so that evil had not long to stand
Unsalved, for we no sooner came before
The shattered bridge, than toward me turned my guide
With such sweet aspect as I saw of yore
When at the mountain's foot; then opened wide
His arms, after some plan of conduct laid,
And took me, having well the landslip eyed.
And like a man whose task is worked and weighed
At once, who seems before him still to see,
So lifting me on one crag, he surveyed
Another, saying, "Thereto grapple thee
Next after, but before thou venturest,
Prove whether fit for thy support it be."
No way was there for one in lead-cloak drest,
For we, though I was backed, and he a sprite
Could scarcely make our way from crest to crest.
And were it not the bank attained less height
On that side than the former, I say nought
Of him, but I must have been vanquished quite.

But forasmuch as Evilpits is wrought
To slope all downwards to the neathmost well,
From every valley's plan, it must be thought
That one ridge hath to sink, and one to swell;
We natheless the peak at length attained,
Where once the last stone from its fittings fell.
The breath was from my lungs so cleanly drained,
That scarce for one step more they could suffice,
And down I sat upon the first ledge gained.
"See," said my master, "now unsluggardise
Thyself, for man achieves not fame, on plumes
Or under curtains, whilst he sits or lies.
Without which whosoe'er his life consumes,
Leaves of himself such vestiges on soil,
As froths on waters, or in welkin fumes.
Arise up therefore, overcome the toil
By the soul's force, which, if she do not quail
With her gross body, conquers every broil.
Thou wilt have yet a longer stair to scale,
This to have cast behind is not enow;
If thou conceivest, turn to good avail."

Thereat I rose, in breath not showing how
I stood ill-furnished, but affecting more,
And said, "Lead on, I'm bold and fearless now."
Then forwards by another ridge we bore,
Which narrow was, and jagg'd, and scarcely scalable
And steeper far than we had past before.
Talking I went to show myself unquailable,
When from another chasm a voice was heard,
For syllabling of language unavailable.
Of what it uttered, I could tell no word,
Though standing on the arch's keystone then,
But he that spoke methought by wrath was stirred.
Down looked I, but no eyes of living men
Could reach that bottom through the lightless air.
Then said I, "Master, come from yonder glen
Forwards, and down the bulwark let us fare.
For as I hear and understand not, I
See likewise, but unravel nothing there."
"No otherwise," said he, "shall I reply
Except by deed, for such a fair request
Should by the grant be followed silently."

Then downward from the bridge's head we prest,
Hard by the mound that eighth in order stood,
And thence the gulf to me was manifest.
And there I saw such fearful multitude
Of serpents, and so manifold in kind
That now again the memory thicks my blood.
No more let Lybia's sands be borne in mind,
Though Elops, Cenchris, and Pareas be
With Jaculus and Amphisbœna joined;
So many pests, or so abhorred, nor she,
Though banded with all Ethiopia can
Produce, nor all the coasts of the Red Sea.
Thorough this dismallest fell foison ran
A naked and a panic-stricken crew,
Hopeless of hiding-place or talisman.
Their hands were tied behind with serpents, who
In front the tail and head together wound,
By which the loins of each were driven through.
And lo! at one who stood beneath our mound
A serpent darting, stung him in the place
Where to the neck the shoulder-blades are bound.

No pen could *i* nor *o* so quickly trace
  As he was fired, and burnt, and had to fall
Consumed to ashes; then within a space,
As on the ground he lay demolished all,
  Those ashes, self-impelled, began to rear
Themselves upright, and their whole shape recal.
The Phœnix thus, as from great bards we hear,
  Is wont to die, and then to new birth wake,
As he approaches his five-hundredth year;
Nor grain, nor blade, in life will he partake,
  But what amomus weeps, and frankincense;
And myrrh and spikenard his last swathings make.
And as a man that falls, and knows not whence,
  Through any fit, which mortal functions ties,
Or drawn to ground by devilish influence;
Who lifts himself and round him casts his eyes,
  Wholly amated by the enormous pain
Which he has undergone, and stares, and sighs;
So looked the sinner when he rose again.
  O how severe God's justice is to see,
Which doth such pounding blows in vengeance rain!

My guide demanded who he was; and he
  Replied, "Into the teeth of this fell glen,
Not long ago, I rained from Tuscany;
A beast's life pleased me, not the life of men;
  Mule that I was: John Fûtchi Beast has been
My name, and well Pistoya made my den."
"Charge him," said I, "to budge not, for I mean
  To learn, down hither by what crime he came,
In whom I knew a man of blood and spleen."
The sinner understood, nor did he aim
  To hide, but turned on me his brow and mind,
And crimsoned in the face for dreary shame:
Then cried, "It grieves me more, that thou shouldst find
  Me in the misery, which thou look'st upon,
Than when I first the other life resigned.
That which thou seek'st, I must perforce make known.
  Thus low down I am sent, as being he
(Though the blame falsely was on others thrown)
That stole the fair plate from the sacristy;
  But lest, if e'er thou quit these places dark,
Thou shouldst rejoice to tell this tale of me,

Open thine ears to my proclaim, and hark!
Pistoya first of all her Blacks is peeled,
Then Florence must new men and counsels mark;
Mars draws a flame, in rolling clouds concealed,
Out of the vale of Mâgra, whence at last
The battle breaks upon the Picene field,
In a pernicious and impetuous blast,
At which he suddenly the cloud shall split,
And on the sword shall every White be past;
And this I tell, that thou mayst wail for it."

CANTO XXV.

As soon as thus the thief had ended, he
Lifting his hands a double fico wrought,
And shouted, "Take it, God; I cast it thee."
Then was I to be friends with serpents taught,
For hereat one of them his neck embound,
As if to say, "More shalt thou utter nought."
Another coiled so fast his arms around,
That not a joint the least way could he turn,
And pinned him through, and overclenched the wound.
Pistoya, O Pistoya, why not burn
Thyself at once, that none thy place may tell,
If thus to grow in guilt thy offspring learn?
Through all the circles of the lightless hell,
Spirit against God prouder I saw none,
Not him that from the walls of Thebæ fell.

He fled away now all his words were done,
And I a Centaur saw with wrath embued
Come crying, "Where is this embittered one?"
Maremma rears not such a multitude
Of snakes as he along his withers bore,
To where the manly semblance was endued.
A dragon stood behind his nape, which o'er
His shoulders either way its wings outspread,
And the same scorches all it comes before.
"That shape is Cacus," my good master said,
"Who, dwelling in the rock of Aventine,
Made oftentimes a lake of sanguine red.
He with his brethren wends not in a line
To quite the fraudful theft that he achieved,
From the great herd, that near him browsed, of kine.
Whence of his crooked life he was bereaved
By Hercules's mace, which gave well nigh
A hundred blows, and he not ten perceived."
As he was speaking, both that shape went by,
And underneath us came three spirits new,
Of whom my guide was not aware, nor I,

Except upon their calling, "What are you?"
Whereat our dialogue was laid aside,
And all attention on themselves they drew.
I knew them not, but as it may betide,
Oft by some chance or circumstance, one shade
Had need to name another, when he cried
To his companions, "Where has Chanfa stayed?"
At which my guide's attention to secure
My finger on my lips and chin I laid.
If, Reader, now thy faith should scarce endure
That which I write, it will be no surprise,
For I, who saw it, hardly judge it sure.
As still I gazed with open-lidded eyes,
Behold, where a six-footed serpent springs
In front of one, and limb on limb applies.
The middle feet about his chest it flings,
His arms it pinions with the foremost twain,
Then both his cheeks between its fangs it brings.
The hind legs pendant on his thighs remain,
And through their interval its tail was placed,
And doubled-up behind his loins again.

No tree the serried ivy has embraced
So tightly ever, as this reptile grim
The alien members with its own enlaced.
They welded afterwards, as though each limb
Were melted wax, and all their color blent,
Nor what had been appeared in it nor him;
As through the paper held above is sent
By the flame gradually a browner hue,
Which is not blackness, and the white is spent;
The others who were standing still to view,
Cried out, "O how thou changest, Angelo!
See now, thou art not either one or two."
Already did both heads together grow,
And in a single aspect we descried
Two figures merged, and two disfeatured so:
Two arms the fourfold levers had supplied,
The legs and arms, the double womb and chest,
Became such parts as never man espied.
No pristine semblance there was manifest,
Biform and nulliform the kindless brute
Seemed, and away with limping paces prest.

As under Dogdays' potent lash the newt,
From hedge to hedge when shifting, shall appear
A lightning if across the path it shoot,
So seemed a fiery snake in its career,
As at the bellies of the two it sped,
All black and livid, like a mildewed ear.
It in the part by which man first is fed
Stung one of them, and straight upon the stroke
Fell back below him, on the ground outspread.
Thereon the stung man stared, but nothing spoke;
He staggered on his feet, that close were set,
Like one by slumbers or by fever broke.
The serpent him, he eyed the serpent yet,
One by the mouth, the other through the wound,
Fumed violently, and the fumings met.
No more let Lucan now the story sound
Of miserable Nassidius or Sabellus,
But hark! for what a flight our wings are bound;
No more of Arethuse let Ovid tell us,
Or Cadmus, for if these to brook or snake
He turns by poet-craft, I am not jealous.

For never did he yet two natures make
To change themselves by such a mutual act,
That either's form should other's body take.
The twain reciprocated by this pact;
His tail into a fork the serpent split,
And the stung man his footmarks did contract.
His legs and thighs he did together fit
And solder so, there could not have been traced
Within a while one vestige of the slit.
The figure, which beneath him was defaced,
Its cloven tail erected, and its skin
Grew soft, and him a harder rind embraced.
I saw the arms drawn by the armpits in,
And of the snake the two short feet had grown
As much in length as those had lost herein.
The middle feet about each other thrown,
Became the organ that's concealed by males,
The caitiff making two limbs of his own.
And thus while each of them the smoke yet veils
In foreign hues, and while the new skin grows
On this side, as on yonder side it fails,

Down sank the one, and up the other rose,
Nor were the baleful jets disparted now
Whereby each mouth its native shape foregoes.
Thus he that stood, retracted toward his brow,
And what excess of matter that acquired,
Did the plain vacant cheeks with ears endow.
The rest which kept its place, and nought retired,
Made to the face a nose from what transcended,
And thickt the lips by that which was desired.
The fallen shape its muzzle now protended,
And both its ears within its head conveyed,
As the snail draweth in its horns offended.
Its tongue too, which was whole before, and made
Her language pliant, in a fork dividing,
The forkt one closed up, and the fumes were stayed.
The spirit, in the bestial coil residing,
Fled hissing, whom the other was not slack
To speak and spit on, down the valley gliding.
Then turned upon him his new shouldered back,
And told the others, "I'll have Buoso run
As I did, reptile-wise along my track."

These changings and rechangings saw I done
In the seventh hold, whose unexampled guise
Must make my pen's excuse if flowers it shun.
And though some dizziness upon mine eyes
Had grown, and wildered though my brain might be,
To fly so quickly could they not devise,
But I might well Pûtcho Shancâto see;
And this had been the only one who kept
His pristine shape, of all the former three.
The fourth by thee, Gavillé, still is wept.

CANTO XXVI.

Rejoice, O Florence, now thou art so great,
That over land and sea thou beat'st thy wing,
And all through hell thy name dost promulgate!
I found among the villains such a ring
Of five thy citizens, as works me shame,
Nor does thence unto thee great glory spring.
But if from morning dreams truth ever came,
Thou shalt, or ever it be long, have tasted
What Prato craves for thee, none else to name;
And had it come, it had not too much hasted;
I would it were, as it shall surely be,
And carks me more, the more my life is wasted.
We parted hence, and by such stairs as we
Were furnished in the bournes for our descent,
My guide remounted, and supported me.

And pushing our untraded path we went
Through crags and splinters of the rocky hill,
Where foot without hand failed of its intent.
O then I grieved, and I regrieve it still,
When I retrace the memory of that sight;
And lay a double curb upon my skill,
Lest it, where virtue guides not, should take flight,
And make me grudge the grace to my own soul
That stars afford me, or some better might.
As peasant, resting on the grassy knoll,
What season he, that all the world beshines,
His face upon us lifts with least control,
Against that hour which fly to gnat resigns,
Sees fireflies muster down along the glen,
It may be, where he ploughs, or strips the vines;
So many flames had made the whole eighth den
Resplendent, as I witnessed, when I neared
That part which brought the base within my ken.
And as Elijah's parting car appeared
To him that from the bears his vengeance drew,
When the steeds, ramping, up to heavenward steered,

Which with his eyes he could not so pursue
As to see aught except the flame alone,
That upwards like a crimson cloudlet flew;
So through the chanelled gorge came gliding on
All these, for every fire a guilty sprite
Embezzled, and by none its theft was shown.
I stood so leaning forwards for the sight
Above the bridge, that but for taking hold
Upon a splinter I had fallen outright.
My guide, perceiving my intentness, told
Me thereat, "In the flames the spirits bide;
Each one by that which brands him is enrolled."
"O master, I am more assured," I cried,
"From hearing thee, but so I deemed of it
Already, and fain to thee would have applied.
Who is in yonder flame, that seemeth split
Above, as though it mounted from the pyre
For Polynices and his brother lit?"
"Tydides with Ulysses in that fire
Is gnawed," he answered me, "and as they ran
In wrath together, so they catch their hire.

Therein they have to rue the fraudful plan
Of the great horse, that made the fountain head
From whence the gentill blood of Rome began.
Therein they rue the art, through which the dead
Deidamia still Achilles blames,
And the Palladium there is visited
Upon them." "If, O master, in those flames,
If they can speak, I pray thee and repray,"
Said I, "and count I make a thousand claims,
That thou wilt not refuse to me to stay
So long as till the forked flame draws nigh;
See how I bend from eagerness that way."
"Thy prayer deserves," he said, "much praise, and I
Accept it therefore, but be thou content
That thy own tongue should lay its office by,
And leave with me to speak, for all thy bent
I understand, because thou mayst displease
Those Greeks, perchance, by terms less eloquent."
Then as the flame came forward by degrees
To where my guide found place and season due,
I heard him giving form to sounds like these.

"O ye that in the single flame are two,
If I have merited, when life was mine,
If more or less I merited from you,
When in the world I penned the high-proud line,
Stir not, but speak that one whom I require,
Where went he out to die, and left no sign?"
Thereat the old-world flame his taller spire
Began to flicker, with a murmuring
As that of one, which fitful breezes tire;
Then to and fro his peak meandering,
As if it were the tongue he spoke withal,
Threw forth a voice, this language syllabling;
"When I took leave of Circe, who in thrall
Had kept me off Caieta 'bove a year,
Before Eneas did the strand so call,
No aged father's wretchedness, nor dear
Child's aspect, nor the love so nobly earned,
That should have made Penelope's glad cheer,
Could the great passion quell with which I burned,
To get me knowledge of the globe, and be
One that the vice and worth of man had learned.

And forth upon the deep and unshut sea
  I launched me with one boat, and that small train
Of comrades that had not forsaken me.
I saw this coast and that as far as Spain,
  And as the Sardians' island, and the rest
Which that sea washes, and the Moors' domain.
And I and all my crew were age-opprest
  And stiffened, when we reached that narrow strait,
Where Hercules his bounding columns placed,
That man should never further penetrate;
  And passing now Seville upon the right,
And Ceuta toward the left of ocean's gate,
'O comrades, who to this far-west, in spite,'
  Said I, 'of danger's million threats have run,
For this brief gloaming of perception's light
That we inherit still, ere life is done,
  Be loth to abdicate the experience
Of yon unpeopled world behind the sun;
Consider that original from whence
  Ye spring, to live not like the beasts, but strain
After all knowledge and all excellence.'

And by this little speech I made so fain
My comrades for the voyage, that back to warn
Them afterwards I might have sought in vain.
And having turned our poop against the morn,
We made our sails wings for the mad emprize,
And further ever toward the left were borne.
And now night looked on us with all the eyes
Of yonder pole, and ours had so declined,
As hardly from the ocean-floor to rise.
Five times had been rekindled, five had pined,
Since first we entered on the daring way,
That sheen by which the moon is underlined,
When there appeared to us a mountain grey
From distance, and far loftier to view
Than all which I had seen before that day.
We joyed, and soon it gave us cause to rue,
When rose a whirlwind from that coast new-found
That on the vessel's foremost corner flew,
And thrice, with all his waters, whirled us round
Till up our poop was lifted at the will
Of whom I name not, and our bows were drowned;
Then the shut waves above my head were still."

CANTO XXVII.

Now was already stilled, and upward spired,
To speak no more, that flame, and from our view,
At my lief poet's licence, now retired.
When following after him, another drew
Our eyes upon the summit of his cone
By a confusèd sound which thence it threw.
As the Sicilian bull—that by the moan
Of that man bellowed first, and this was right,
Who had attempered with his file the tone—
Roared by the voice of the tormented wight,
So that by anguish it alone seemed rent
(All copper as it was), and ransackt quite,
So here, obtaining neither path nor vent
In what they issued from, those words of woe
Assumed the language of their element.

But after, when forthright they 'gan to flow
Across the peak, whereon they had imprest
The motions of the glancing tongue below,
We heard it say, "O thou, whom I addrest
My speech to, that hast said in Lombard style,
'Now go thy ways, I thee no more molest,'
Though I come haply late upon the file,
Be pleased to stay and talk with me behind,
For me it irks not, and I burn the while.
If newly thou art fallen into this blind
Condition from that sweetest Latin land,
In which the root of all my fault I find,
At peace or war, say, doth Romagna stand?
For there betwixt Urbino, and the chain
That Tiber leaps from, was my native land."
As still intent and leaning I remain,
My guide now touched me on the side, and said,
"Speak thou, it is a Latin ghost again."
Then I, who had the answer in my head,
Began to speak as thus without delay:
"O soul, that under there art coverèd,

Thy country never was, nor is this day,
Without war brewing in her tyrants' breasts,
But nought left I behind of open fray.
As she for years hath been, Ravenna rests;
There does the eagle of Polenta brood;
And Cervia with his shadowing plumes invests.
That city, which the stubborn siege withstood,
And which the stack of bleeding Frenchmen laid,
By the vert talons finds herself subdued.
Verrucchio's mastiffs, the old and young, who played
Foul jailers to Montagna, still are known
To make the teeth bore where of old they made.
The cities on Santerno and Lamone
Obey that lion of the argent lair,
Who puts from spring to fall new tenets on.
And that, whose flank Cesena washes, where
The mountain and the plain incorporate,
Of tyranny and freedom so must share.
Now who thou art, I pray thee to relate;
Be not less kind than all that have gone past,
So may thy fame on earth uphold her state?"

Then in his manner having roared, and cast
Some time his sharpened vertex either way,
The flame articulated thus his blast:
"If I but thought this knowledge to convey
To one that on the earth again would tread,
My spire without more flickering might stay;
But forasmuch as from this neathmost bed
Returns none ever, if the truth I hear,
I answer, and no ignominy dread.
I was a warrior, thence a Cordelier,
Thinking, so girt, my quittance to have got;
And sure, my trust had been accomplished here,
But the Great Priest, and evil be his lot,
To my old vices brought me to decline,
And when and wherefore I would have thee wot.
When yet that shape of bone and pulp was mine
Which from the womb I took, my deeds were more
Congenial to the fox than leonine.
All wiles and covert ways of politic lore
I mastered, and their use so well applied,
That rumor bruited it from shore to shore.

Now to that point of life when I descried
Myself approaching, where to furl his sail,
And reef his tackle, each man should provide;
That which had pleased me first was now my bale,
And penitent and confessed, I made my peace,
O wretched man, and this might now avail!
But that the prince of modern Pharisees,
Then having wars hard by the Lateran,—
And not with Jews or Saracens were these,
Nor had he foe but was a Christian man,
That ne'er at Acra triumphed, nor in chase
Of traffic to the Soldan's country ran;—
Not heeding sacred orders, nor high place
In his own person, nor that belt in me
Whose putters-on have been a leaner race;—
As Constantine to cure his leprosy
Required Sylvester on Soracte, so
To quell this fever of his pride, did he
Address me for his leech, and prayed to know
What I would counsel; but my tongue I held,
Because his words appeared from wine to flow.

Then said he, 'From thy heart be fear expelled;
This moment I absolve thee, show me how
Shall Penestrina to the ground be felled;
I can lock heaven, and unlock heaven, as thou
Art well aware; for this the keys are twain
Which my forerunner has not prized enow.'
Then did those weighty reasons me constrain
To judge, that silence my worse counsel were,
And thus I said, 'Since, father, thou art fain
To wash me from the guilt I now should bear,
Long promises, to brief performance wed,
Shall make thee triumph on thy lordly chair.'
Now Francis came for me, when I was dead,
But one among those cherubs that are black,
'Leave him, O do not wrong me,' rose and said.
'Downwards among my minions he must pack,
Because he gave that counsel fraudulent,
Since which I have been ever at his back;
For none can be absolved but who repent,
Nor can a man repent and choose in one,
The contradicting terms will not consent.'

O how I shook myself, poor wight undone,
When he laid hold on me, and cried, 'Ye thought
Perchance, I could in logic be outrun.'
To Minos then he took me, Minos brought
His tail eight times about his back severe,
And bit it speaking, as by rage distraught,
'A culprit for the filching fire is here.'
Thence am I lost, and walk in such attire,
Rankling my heart, as I to thee appear."
Thus having ended all his words, the fire
Departed, with an action dolorous,
Tossing and flickering his pointed spire.
My guide and I went on (and left him thus)
Along the rock, till we the bridge had gained
That vaults the moat, where those iniquitous
Who trouble get, by making strife, are pained.

CANTO XXVIII.

O WHO could, but with words unmeasured, state
Completely all the wounds and all the blood
I now beheld, though oft he should relate
Some portion; sure each tongue would be subdued
By reason of our language and our brain,
That lack the skill to grasp such magnitude.
If there assembled all the hosts again
That ever on the many-fortuned soil
Of broad Apulia poured their blood with pain
On Roman edges, or in that long broil
That made of rings, as Livy's volume shows,
And erreth not, so ponderous a spoil;
And all the crowds that tasted harmful blows
For facing Robert Guiscard; and all they
Of whom yet Ceperâno's clods expose

The bones, where each Apulian showed foul play;
And those of Tagliacozzo, where to him
That armed not, old Alardo, fell the day;
And one his lopt, and one his transfixt limb
Should lift, yet never so could they present
A model of the ninth pit's fashion grim.
No tun, whence cant or middle-board is rent,
Is pervious like as one I found among
This troop, down-cleft from chin to foul wind's vent.
His bowels with his legs entangled hung,
His liver and the dismal pouch lay bare,
That turns what passes down the gorge to dung.
And whilst mine eyes upon him fastened were,
He saw and shouted, while his breast he set
With both hands open, "See me, how I tear!
See how dismembered goeth Mahomet!
See Ali at my front, cleft through the face,
From chin to forelock, walketh weeping yet.
And all the rest thou seest in this place
Are others, that offence and schism have sowed
In life, and thence are cleft in even case.

A fiend is yonder, in such cruel mode
Who splitteth us, repassing all the train,
When we remeasured have the dolorous road,
On the sword's edge, for all the wounds again
Are closed, ere we before him re-appear.
But who art thou that musing dost remain
Upon the rock, and haply out of fear,
Desiring still to keep the pangs at bay
That are decreed for thy indictments here?"
"Nor has death reached him, nor doth sin convey
To torment," said my master, "but that he
May full experience reap, on this our way,
I, that am dead, must his conductor be,
And lead him down hell thus from grade to grade;
And that is true, as now I speak to thee."
Then saw I full a hundred ghosts that stayed
Within the moat, on me to fix their eyes,
By wonder to forget their torment made.
"O do to friar Dulcinus then advise,
Thou that belike wilt shortly see the sun,
Unless to join me quickly here he tries,

To make good store of food, which left undone
May bring the Novarese, through stress of snow,
A triumph else not lightly to be won."
Such words as these, with one foot poised to go,
Mohammed spoke to me, then pointed it
Upon the ground and from us parted so.
Another then, that had his gullet slit,
And nose from underneath his eyelids lopt,
Nor had he but one ear, amidst the fit
Of wonder like the others having stopt
To view me, first of them his mouth outspread,
That with vermilion all its corners dropt.
"O thou, whom guilt condemneth not," he said,
"And whom in Latin land, methinks, I knew,
If I'm by too much likeness not misled,
Remember Pier da Medicina too,
If ever thou return to that sweet plain
That from Vercelli slants to Marcabou;
And tell to Fâno's best-deserving twain,
To Master Guido, and to Angiolell,
That if prevision here be not in vain,

They shall be thrown out from their bark pellmell,
And sack-drowned off Catholica, by guile
And by false treason of a tyrant fell;
From Cyprus even to Majorca's isle
Saw never Neptune crime of such black dye,
No, not by pirates, not in Argive style.
The traitor, that sees only with one eye,
And sways the land, from sight of which to fast
It had been well for one whom I am nigh,
Shall bring them to a parley, then so cast
His toils, that they shall need not vow nor prayer
To offer up against Focâra's blast."
"Discover," said I to him, "and declare
To whom his eye such bitter things hath taught,
If any tidings thou wouldst have me bear."
Thereat upon a comrade's head he brought
His arm, and open set his mouth, and said,
"Behold the man is here, and speaketh nought.
He being exiled, set the doubt aside
Of Cæsar, saying that the means prepared
Did never without scathe delays abide."

Ah me! with what a crest-fallen mien he fared,
His tongue within the very gullet cleft,
This Curio, that thus to counsel dared.
Another, that of both hands was bereft,
Their stumps uplifting through the tawny gloom,
Till quite begrimed with blood his face was left,
Cried out, "Remember Mosca too, from whom
That word, alas! 'Done deed will stand,' began,
Which sowed for Tuscany an evil doom."
"And," added I, "the death of all thy clan;"
Whence he, accumulating pain on pain,
Past, like a woe-begone, demented man.
But I to look upon the troop remain,
And saw that which I should not feel secure
Unwitnest thus and single to maintain,
If me my conscience did not reassure,
That good companion, who doth make man bold
Below the hauberk, that he feeleth pure.
I saw, and still it thinks me to behold,
Along the path a headless body tread,
As trod the others of the dreary fold.

And by the hair it bore the severed head,
  Dependent, like a lantern, in its hand,
And the face looked on mine, and "Ah me!" said.
He made himself for his own lamp to stand,
  And they were two in one and one in two;
How this might be he knoweth, whose command
So fixed it; and as near the bridge he drew,
  He raised his arm, with all his head on high,
To closer bring the words which thence he threw.
"Now see the galling pain," I heard him cry,
  "Thou breather, who the dead go'st visiting,
And see, if any one with mine can vie.
And that thou mayest full tidings of me bring,
  Know in me Bertrand of the Borne, that one
Who gave bad counsels to the stripling king.
I set rebellion 'twixt the sire and son;
  No worse Achitophel's foul goads whilere
To David and to Absalom have done;
Because I severed links that are so dear,
  I carry my brain severed thus, ah woe!
From its beginning in my body here;
In me Lex Talionis holdeth so."

CANTO XXIX.

Now had my body's lights been swilled so deep
Through the grim wounds and crowds innumerous,
That all their longing was to stand and weep.
But Virgil said, "Why dost thou linger thus?
Why dost thou lodge and 'stablish so thy view
Amongst the mammockt shades lugubrious?
Thou didst not in the other pits thus do;
Consider, if to number them thou mean,
That round the vale clasps twenty miles and two;
And now the moon beneath our feet has been;
The time is brief that we have now to stay,
And more to see is yet than thou hast seen."
"If thou hadst minded," I began to say,
"The object whereon my regard was bent,
Thou mightest have indulged me my delay."

And partly, while I made this answer, went
My leader forwards, and I followed near,
And added, "Where with such a keen intent
Mine eyes were pointed, in this cavern here
Bemourns, I think, a spirit of my kin,
The crime which underneath is paid so dear."
My master answered, "Never more begin
To break thy thought's wave on him, but apply
To what is next, and leave him there within.
I saw him at the bridge's foot come by
And threat thee, pointing with his finger, hard,
And I heard one 'Geri del Bello' cry.
But thy observance was meantime so marred
Through him, that once in Hautefort was head,
That he went on, and thou didst not regard."
"Ah, dear my guide, that violent death," I said,
"Which has not been avenged for him in sooth
By one, to whom the ignominy spread,
Made him disdainful, if I judge the truth;
For this he past, and spoke not, from my face,
And hereby has he moved me more to ruth."

Thus talked we, till we had arrived the place
That from the rock shows first another glen,
If light sufficed, as far as to its base.
On Evilpits' extremest cloister when
I mounted, and its novices were made
To come within the limits of our ken,
Forthwith a battery upon me played,
Whose shafts were barbed with ruth, from diverse wails,
At which my hands upon both ears I laid.
As if all pains from lazars in the dales
Of Chiâna, 'twixt September and July,
With all Maremman, all Sardinian ails,
Together in a moat should be thrown by,
Such woe was here, and such a stench derived,
As uses from the limbs that putrefy.
Descending, on the last mound we arrived
Of that long spur, and toward the left, not less
Than elsewhere, turned; now was my sight enlived
To reach that bottom, where the executress,
(Unerring Justice,) of the liege supreme,
The numbered counterfeiters punishes.

No dismaller to look on was, I deem,
The Aiginetan people all infirm,
Whenas the air did so with malice teem,
That the animals, unto the smallest worm,
Fell dead, and after were the nations old
Restored, as poets of a truth affirm,
From seed of ants, than I could now behold
The spirits, all along that valley gray,
To languish in their clusters manifold.
One on the back, one on the belly lay
Of his companion, others shifted place
Crawling along their pitiable way.
We plodded on in silence, pace by pace,
With eye and ear on the diseas'd intent,
Who up to lift themselves were out of case.
I saw two sit, upon each other leant,
As men to warm them oft set plate on plate,
From head adown to foot with scalls besprent.
And never boy, for whom the squire must wait,
Plies currycomb so fast, nor groom at night
Who grudges to prolong his watch so late,

As each of these led o'er his flesh the bite
Of his nails oft, and could no succors find
But this against his itch's great despite.
And so the nails drew down the scabby rind,
As 'twere a knife, that scrapes off every scale
Of bream, or what fish has a coarser kind.
"O thou that with thy fingers dost dismail
Thyself," began my master unto one,
"And whom as pincers often they avail;
Tell me, if Latin spirit there be none
Among those here; so may thy nail keep hard
For that which must eternally be done?"
"We both are Latin, whom you see so marred,"
Said weeping one, "but of thyself now tell,
What art thou that hast hereto such regard?"
"I am one who descend from fell to fell
Before this living man," my guide thus spoke,
"And am resolved and mean to show him hell."
At this the mutual upholding broke,
And trembling turnèd each one round on me,
With all who caught the sound's reflected stroke.

Then full upon me bending did I see
  My gracious master, saying, "Ask thy will;"
And I began, on finding him agree:
"So may your memories, unstolen still,
  In the foreworld out of the mind of man
Stand, while the sun shall many periods fill;
Tell me what men you are, and of what clan?
  Let not your hideous and heart-sickening woe
Fright you from showing all." Then one began:
"I was an Aretine, and Albero
  Of Siena got me burnt by his request;
But what I died for brings me not so low.
'Tis true I told him, speaking but in jest,'
  That I a journey through the air could take;
And he, being more of whim than wit possest,
Required the proof, and for I could not make
  A Dædalus of him, he got me then
Doomed by his blest begetter to the stake.
But for the alchemy I wrought with men
  I am by Minos damned, whom no endeavor
Deludes, into the last pit of the ten."

"Now," said I to the poet, "was there ever
A giddy nation, like the Sienese?
Certes, the very French have been so never."
The other leper, hearing words like these,
Replied to my description: "Only leave
Lo Stricca out, who knew such thrift, and please
To leave out Nicholas, who did conceive
Those costly fires, that with the cloves are lit,
Amidst that garden where such seed yet cleaves.
The club too, that helpt Catcha to get quit
Of all his vasty foliage and his vines,
And where the giddy man put forth his wit.
And to acquaint thee better, who combines
With thee to rail upon Sienna so,
Look on my face with narrowed lid for signs
That speak the spirit of Capocchio,
Who metals falsified by alchemy,
And thou wilt, if I rightly scan thee, know
How good an ape of nature I could be."

CANTO XXX.

When Juno, for the cause of Semelè,
Was so incensed with all of Theban strain,
As once and more she proved herself to be;
Such frenzy kindled Athamas's brain,
That toward him as he saw his wife to make,
On each arm freighted with his children twain,
He cried, "Spread out the nets, that I may take
The lioness and whelps in passage there;
And then began his pitiless claws to shake,
And took one, who the name Learchus bare,
And whirled him round, and dashed him on a stone,
Then drowned she with herself her other care.
And when vicissitude had overthrown
The all-presuming Trojans' high-proud state,
And quelled the kingdom and the king in one;

Hecuba sad, captived, and desolate,
When dead she had seen Polyxena before,
And found upon the sands the lifeless weight,
Ah woful woman, of her Polydore, —
Of reason reft, she barked out like a hound,
Her mind was wrung with agony so sore.
But nor in Troy nor Thebes were ever found
The savage furies, that could so prevail,
Or human members, or a beast's to wound,
Like as I saw two naked spirits pale
Run biting, in such fashion as displays
The boar who breaks from his confining pale;
And one has reached Capocchio, and lays
Teeth on his neck, and hauling him, has made,
By starts, the firm-set ground his belly graze.
Thereat the Aretine, who trembling stayed,
Said, "Yonder goblin's Gianni Schicchi, who
Goes raving, trimming thus each other shade."
"O," said I, "may the other of the two
Not set his fangs on thee, nor let it cost
Thee pains to name him, ere he start from view."

"That is," he answered me, "the old-world ghost,
Abominable Myrrha, who became
Her father's lover, with a love that crost
The bounds of fitness. To his couch she came,
In herself counterfeiting other's make,
As he who quits us there, with equal blame,
Endured Buoso Donâti's form to take,
And willed, accrediting the will aright,
For the first lady of the stud her sake."
Now after those mad two were out of sight,
On whom mine eyes had been so firmly bent,
I turned them on the misborn others quite,
And saw one that a lute's shape would present,
If only he should have his groin cut straight
From off the side, on which a man is rent.
The direful dropsy, which so disparate
Makes every limb with humors indigest,
That face to paunch is not commensurate,
Made his two lips as far apart to rest
As in the hectic patient, who from thirst
Turns upward one, the other toward his chest.

"O ye that walk within this world accurst,
And why I wot not, from all penance free,
Attend and look," he thus addrest us first,
"On Master Adam and his misery.
I had enough on earth of all my will,
And now one drop of water faileth me.
The brooks that gush from every greenwood hill
In Casentine toward Arno, keeping fresh,
And cool, and soft, their channels, haunt me still,
And haunt not vainly, for their semblance nesh,
Doth much more parch me than the maladies,
That so impoverish my face in flesh.
The rigid justice, which my frame so dries,
Takes order from the place where I committed
My crime, to crowd the issues of my sighs.
There is Romêna, there I counterfeited
The metal that the Baptist's mark should owe,
For which I have in fire my body quitted;
Though could I see but here the soul in woe
Of Guido, Alexander, or their brother,
I'd not for Branda spring the sight forego.

And one's already come, if we no other
Than true accounts from those mad runners get;
What helps it me, that have my limbs in tether?
Had I had so much lightness in me yet,
That but an inch an age I could have stirred,
Myself upon this path I would have set,
And sought him out amongst this nation blurred,
For all that half a mile may be within
Their breadth, and full eleven miles them engird.
Through these am I with such a cursed kin,
They did to beat those florins make me fain,
Which had three carats of alloy put in."
I asked him, "Who are those downstricken twain,
That like bathed hands in winter I discern
To smoke, who close to thy right flank remain?"
"I found them so, nor have they given one turn,"
He answered, "since I rained among this clique,
And shall not haply for an hour eterne:
Sinon is one, from Troy a perjured Greek;
The other that false wife, who Joseph blamed;
The broiling fever makes them so to reek."

Here one of these, misliking to be named,
  Perchance, in such a shadow-casting tone,
His fist against the tight-strung belly aimed,
That sounded like a tumbrel; whereupon
  This Master Adam smote him on the face
With elbow, that was nought less hard i'th' bone.
And said to him, "Although to shift my place
  My loaded limbs forbid, still have I got
An arm unloosed to serve in such a case."
And Sinon answered, "But thou hadst it not
  So ready, when thou wentest to the fire;
But so and more to coin withal, I wot."
"In this thou art not verily a liar,
  But wast less true," the dropsied man replied,
"When they of Troy did for the truth enquire."
"If false I spoke, thy coin was falsified,"
  Said Sinon, "and for one crime I am here,
But thou for more than any fiend beside."
"The horse, remember the horse, thou perjurer,"
  The man of swollen abdomen replies,
"And gall this thee, which unto all is clear."

"Thirst gall thee," said the Greek, "which thy tongue dries
To splitting, and the water purulent
That makes thy belly so to hedge thine eyes."
"Thy mouth," the man of specie said, "is rent
For utterance of slanders, as of old;
For if I thirst with humors in me pent,
Thou art to fever and to headache sold,
And, for to lick Narcissus' looking-glass,
Wouldst not against a long entreaty hold."
As all intent upon them yet I was,
My master said, "Look now; for me and thee
To quarrel, need it not much further pass."
When I with anger heard him speak to me,
I turned on him in such a shamefaced glow,
As makes my head whirl through the memory.
And as a man that dreameth of his woe,
Who dreaming wishes 'twere a dream, and thus
Craves that which is, as though it were not so;
Thus I became, when so solicitous
Myself to excuse, I ne'er a word could say,
And so excused me, all unconscious.

"Less shame will wash a greater fault away
Than thine has been," said here to me my guide,
"And therefore from thyself all sadness lay;
And reckon I am always by thy side,
If Fortune chance again to lead thee near
To folk in such contention occupied;
For 'tis a base desire such things to hear."

CANTO XXXI.

The selfsame tongue so wounded me before,
As made the blood in both my cheeks to stand,
And after brought the balsam to the sore.
Thus in Achilles' and his father's hand
The poisèd lance was harbinger, they tell,
Of first a bitter message, then a bland.
We turned our backs against the baleful dell
Upon the marge, that all around it lay,
And traversed; not a word yet from us fell.
And now 'twas barely night and barely day,
So that mine eye could not much further push,
But I heard wind a horn with such loud bray,
As might have muffled any thunder's crush,
Which toward one point compelled mine eyes to go
Together full against its violent rush.

After the dismal-fatal overthrow,
When lost his hallowed emprise Charles the Great,
So terribly did not Orlando blow.
I reared my head, and had not long to wait,
When many lofty towers I thought to see,
And said, "O master, what is yonder state?"
"Because thou lookest forth," he answered me,
"Too deep into the dimness, thence indeed
Comes this aberrance of thy phantasy;
Thou wilt see plain, if yonder thou proceed,
How sense is cheated in a far career,
And put on, therefore, somewhat more of speed.'
Then by the hand he took me, kind and dear,
And said, "Or ever we get further, know,
(For thus the fact may less uncouth appear,)
That these are giants, if like towers they show,
And stand within the gulf, about the brim,
Encircled from the navel and below."
As, when the mists clear off, the eyes relimb,
By little and by little forwards led,
That which the vapor-crowded air made dim;

So through the dense and tawny twilight sped,
As close and closer to the brink I wound,
Fled error from me, and possest me dread.
For like as Montereggion is around
The embrasure of its walls with towers bedight,
So all the marge, whereby this gulf was bound,
The Giants horrible with half their height
Entowered, whom Jove yet threatens from his place
In heaven, whenas he thunders in his might.
And now of one of them I saw the face,
Shoulders, and breast, and belly some good part,
And each arm hanging by its flank could trace.
Nature did well for sure to drop the art
Of moulding animals on such a scale,
That agents were to Mars's very heart;
And if she still of elephant and whale
Repent not, he, that scans it close, shall find
Her justice and discretion here prevail;
For, when the disquisition of the mind
To power and evil will shall add its weight,
What succor then remaineth for mankind?

His face appeared to be as broad and great,
As of St. Peter's is the pine at Rome,
And every bone beyond proportionate;
Whereby the bank, which made his perizome
Down from the waist, left so much of him bare,
That to the scalp three Frisians to have clombe
Might all in vain have boasted; for I there
Beheld as much at least as thirty palm,
To where we clasp our mantles counted fair.
"Raufell maunee aumeck zaubee aulm,"
Began that mouth of surquedry to bawl,
Which seemed unsuited for a softer psalm.
"Besotted soul," I heard my master call,
"Keep to thy horn, and vent thyself thereby,
When rage or other passions on thee fall.
Search on thy neck, and thou shalt find full nigh
The belt that holds it bound, O ghost bemused,
Which hooping thy huge bosom thou wilt spy."
Then added, "By himself he stands accused;
Behold that Nimrod, from whose evil thought
One language through the world no more is used.

Come leave him here, nor spend we breath for nought,
For so to him sounds every other speech,
As his to others, which to none is taught."
Now turning towards the left, along the beach
We journeyed forth, and far more dread and vast
We found the next, within a cross-bow's reach.
What master-smith his girdle might have cast,
I wot not, but his arms in sooth were bound,
The right before, the left behind him fast,
Within a chain, that all his bulk enwound
Below the waist, so that I could discern
Full five gyrations of it from the ground.
"This overweening one desired to learn
His power by proof against supremest Jove;
That makes him," said my guide, "this 'vantage earn.
Lo Ephialtes! when the Giants drove
The gods to quake," he wrought full many a feat;
The arms shall stir no more with which he strove."
"Oh, if 'tis possible, I could entreat,"
Said I, "that measureless Briareus
The inquisition of mine eyes may meet."

"Thou shalt Antæus find," he answered thus,
"Not far from hence, who speaketh and is free,
And who to neathmost Ill shall forward us.
Far yonder stands the Giant thou wouldst see,
And he is bound, and were he not in mien
More furious, would to this one well agree."
No stalwart earthquake ever yet has been,
That shook the root of any tower so sore,
As Ephialtes then to shake was seen.
Then feared I death as never heretofore,
And had I not beheld his bonds, there would,
Beyond my fear, have needed nothing more.
So quitting him, our journey we pursued,
And to Antæus came, who full five ell,
Forby his head, above the embrasure stood.
"O thou that in the fortune-turning dell,
Which Scipio made an heiress of renown,
When with his hosts fled Hannibal pellmell,
Didst bring for spoil a thousand lions down;
And hadst thou succored at the high-proud fray
Thy brethren, still it seems believed the crown

Of conquest with the sons of earth might stay;
O take it not in scorn, but forward us
Where frost enclamps Cocytus. Do not say
That we should Typhon seek, or Tityus,
This man can give thee what is here desired;
So stoop, and never curl thy nostril thus;
By fame on earth thy service shall be hired,
For still he lives, and long may life retain,
If not unripe he be by grace required."
So spake my master, whereat he amain
Spread out his hands, and took in them my guide,
Those hands that so could Hercules constrain.
Virgil, thus graspt when he himself espied,
"Come nigh, that I may take thee," gave command;
Then made one load of him and me beside.
As shows the Carisenda, when you stand
Beneath its beetling, if a cloud come by
That meets it, leaning toward the adverse hand;
So seemed Antæus, while I strained mine eye
To see him stooping, and some other way
At such an hour, I had been fain to try;

But us unto the bottom, which doth bray
Judas with Lucifer, he lightly past,
Nor stooping thus vouchsafed a long delay,
But reared aloft, as from a ship the mast.

CANTO XXXII.

If I had but such harsh and rugged lines,
As might befit the dismallest recess,
On which the weight of all the cliffs combines;
Then I the juice of my conceipt would press
More largely; but because I lack this guise,
I come to tell thereof with fearfulness.
For this is not a sportive enterprise,
To speak the universe's lowest hold,
Nor suits a tongue, that Paa and Mammy cries.
The rather may those Queens my strains uphold,
Who helped Amphion rounding Thebes with wall;
That fact may be akin to what is told.
O ye, most miscreated rout of all,
Ye whom the dreadful-named regions keep,
Would God you had been goats or beeves in stall!

As now we landed on the lightless deep,
Before the Giant's foot, far sunk below,
And I still stared upon the embrasure steep,
I heard one cry, "Look where thou treadest so!
Take heed, and trample with thy palms no more
Thy brethren's heads in miserable woe."
I halted thereupon, and saw before
And all around my feet a lake to lie,
That form of glass, and not of water wore.
So gross a veil was ne'er invested by
The wintry Danube out in Oesterreich,
Or Tanais furthest under freezing sky,
As this appear'd, so that of Tamberneich,
Or Pietrapâna, one should thereon hurl,
It would not nigh the margin make a 'creick.'
And as frogs croaking sit, with mouths that curl
Above the waters, whilst in slumber yet,
A-gleaning seems to go the country girl;
The starving spirits in the ice were set,
All blue as far as tinge of shame would spread;
Their teeth in the stork's measure still they beat.

Adown had each one cast his face and head;
Their jaws of cold, their eyes of hearty teen,
The tokens in them all exhibited.
Now when I somewhat had around me seen,
I turned beneath, and saw there two so prest,
That each by other's hair was grown between.
"O ye," said I, "that strain thus breast on breast,
Who were you?" Then they bent their necks askew,
And when their faces were to mine addrest,
Their eyes, which inly soft were hitherto,
Discharged upon their lips, and straight the cold
Congealed the tears, and them enclampt anew.
No rivet ever beam to beam could hold
So closely, whereat like two goats they strook
Their heads together, as by rage controlled.
Then one, from whom the cold had both ears shook
Said to us, with a downcast forehead still,
"Why dost among us, like thy mirror, look?
To know who these were, if it be thy will,
Their father Albert's and their own domain
Was where Bisenzio's waters lapse from hill.

They left one womb, and all the place of Cain
Thou mayst look through, and shalt not find a shade,
That's worthier in candy to remain.
Not him, whose form was riven with his shade,
By one the self-same stroke of Arthur's right,
Not Focacîa, not the head that's laid
So close to mine, as quite confines my sight,
And Sassol Mascheroni was his name;
If thou be Tuscan, thou wilt know the wight.
And lest thou plague me further speech to frame,
I was Camicion, of the Pazzi's race,
And wait Carlîno, to expunge my shame."
From this I saw a thousand in the face
From cold baboonish, whence my joints turn weak,
And ever shall, where frozen ponds I trace.
As toward the point, that all things weighty seek,
The core and centre of the world we came,
And as I trembled from the eternal bleak,
By fortune, or by fate, or my own aim,
I know not, but as through the heads I went,
My foot struck hard a face among the same.

"Why tramplest on me? if thou art not bent,"
He weeping said, "revenge to aggravate
For Montapêrti, why dost me torment?"
"Now, master," said I, "wilt thou for me wait,
Till this man from a doubt shall set me free?
Then press me, when thou wilt, beyond this date."
Still stood my guide, and I began, whilst he
Was bitterly blaspheming evermore,
"Who art thou, that so snarlest under me?"
"Nay, who art thou, that goest through Antenore,
Smiting the cheeks," he said, "of others here?
As, if I lived, it would be far too sore."
"I am alive," I answered, "and full dear
It may be to thee, if thou seek for note,
To rank thy name among my numbers clear."
"The opposite," he said, "controls my vote;
Cease vexing of my soul, and go thy way;
Thou knowest ill to flatter in this moat."
I took him by the nape and 'gan to say,
"I'll have thee now perforce thy name declare,
Or not a hair upon its place shall stay."

He weeping cried, "Why dost thou me unhair?
I shall not answer thee, nor let thee find,
Not if my head a thousand times thou tear."
Already in my hand his hair was twined,
And more than one tuft I had rooted out,
He howling with his eyelids low declined.
"What ails thee, Bocca?" then I heard one shout;
"Hast not enough to clatter with thy jaws,
But thou must bark? What devil goes about?"
"Foul traitor," said I, "now there is no cause
For thee to speak, for I in thy despite
Will bring true tidings where thy torment was."
"Go, go," he said, "and what thou wilt, recite;
Yet do not, if thou issue hence, refuse
To tell whose tongue this moment wagged so light.
He here the silver of the Frenchman rues;
I saw him of Duera, mayst thou tell,
There where to cool themselves the sinners use.
If thou of others there be asked as well,
Beside thee is the Beccarîa here,
Upon whose throat the sword of Florence fell.

Beyond, I think, is Gian del Soldanier,
And Tribaldel, who, under night's dead shade,
Undid Faenza's gate, and Gâno's near."
Already had we him behind us laid,
When I saw two within a delve so froze,
That head of one the other's bonnet made.
And like as bread is chewed from hunger's throes,
The upper on the nether plied his jaw,
Just where the nape upon the brain-pan grows.
As Tydeus did of Menalippus gnaw
The temples in his contumely malign,
So turned he skull and so forth down his maw.
"O thou that showest, by such a bestial sign,
Thy hate of whom thou eatest, speak," said I,
"What reason hadst thou? on this bond of mine,
That if against him thou shalt justly cry,
I, knowing who you are, and all his crime,
May still repay thee in the life on high,
If what I speak with dry not ere its time."

CANTO XXXIII.

That sinner raised his mouth from savage fare,
And wiped it by a lock upon the head
Which he had all behind laid waste and bare.
Then, "Thou wouldst have me to renew," he said,
"Desperate anguish, which my heart doth wring
To think of, ere a word be uttered.
Though, if my speech can be a seed, to bring
Foul fame upon the traitor whom I gnaw,
Then hear my weeping with my answering.
I know not who thou art, nor by what law
Thou camest hither, but a Florentine
Thou seem'st in truth, as from thy speech I draw.
Know then, that I have been Count Ugoline,
And this Archbishop Ruggier; mark now well
The reason for this neighborship of mine.

How by his wicked counsels it befell
That I, who trusted him, was apprehended
And done to death, I have no need to tell;
But what thou canst not yet have comprehended,
I mean, how cruel was my dying hour,
Hear this and judge, if I have been offended.
A narrow crevice, that is in the tower
To which I have the name of hunger left,
And which must yet be made another's bower,
Had shown to me already through its cleft
More moons than one, when that ill sleep on me
Came, which the cover of the future reft.
This man a chief and leader seemed to be,
Who wolf and wolverets toward that mountain chased,
Through which the Pisans cannot Lucca see.
With hounds in trim, hot-breathed and haggard-faced,
Gualandi with Sismondi and Lanfranc,
Abreast together in the van were placed.
Within a little space exhausted sank
The father and the young, and sharp fangs fed,
As I beheld, upon each cloven flank.

Now when my rest before the dawn had fled,
I heard my children crying in their sleep,
(They were with me,) and asking after bread.
Cruel thou art, if thou from sorrow keep,
At thinking what my heart foreboded here,
And if thou weep not, when art used to weep?
I wept, and now the hour was drawing near
At which our food was brought us commonly,
And each was by his dream involved in fear.
Whenas I heard the turning of the key
Below the horrid tower, mine eyes I throw
Upon my sons, but never word spoke we.
I wept not, so like stone I 'gan to grow,
But they did weep, and little Anselm said,
'Father, what ails thee, that thou starest so?'
Nath'less I did not weep, nor answer made
That day, nor all the night after the day,
Till on the world another sun was shed.
Whenas a gleam of light had made its way
Into the doleful dungeon, and I saw
Four faces that my very face portray;

Then did I both my hands for fury gnaw.
But they perceiving me, rose up amain,
Believing I had done so for my maw,
And said, 'O father, it shall be less pain
If thou do feed on us; thou having drest
In miserable flesh, strip us again.'
I held my peace, to make not more distrest;
That day, and all the next day, we were dumb;
Ah savage ground, why didst not ope thy breast?
But when unto the fourth day we had come,
Prone fell down Gaddo at my feet, and he
Cried, 'O my father, wilt thou not give some
Comfort?' then died, and as thou look'st on me
I saw, before the two next days were out,
Fall, one upon another, all my three.
Then blinded I began to grope about,
And three days called them, lying dead and prone,
And hunger then put anguish to the rout."
And thus when he had ceased, his teeth were thrown
Upon the miserable skull again;
As hard they fell, as teeth of hound on bone.

O Pisa, that dost every nation stain
In that fair land, whose language sounds the Sì,
If thee to punish neighbors are not fain,
Then may Gorgona move, with Capraey,
And hedge the mouth of Arno, till he swell,
And stifle every soul that lives in thee.
For though in ill report Count Hugo fell,
That of thy castles he had thee betrayed,
Shouldst thou have pained his children so as well?
Newness of life, O thou new Thebes, had made
Innocent La Brigate and little Hugh,
And those two others, whom my rhyme hath said.
We past on further, where another crew
We saw the ice in savage swathings keep;
Not downwards bent, but quite inverted too.
There very weeping gives not room to weep,
And sorrow, finding on the eyes a stay,
Turns in again to make annoy more deep;
Because the tears, which outward first make way,
Freeze up, and like a crystal vizor all
The round beneath the eyelid overlay.

And though by this the cold, as from a scall,
  The remnant of sensation had expelled
From my numbed countenance, yet methought withal
That I perceived some touch of wind that swelled.
  "And whence, O master, cometh it?" I askt,
"Are not all vapors in this bottom quelled?"
Then he replied, "Thou shortly wilt have past,
  Where to thine eye thou mayst the answer trust,
Seeing the cause which raineth out this blast."
Thereat a caitiff in the icy crust
  Cried out, "O spirits of such cruelty,
That you into the neathmost hold are thrust,
Take off my face the hardened veils, that I
  May vent this anguish which impregns my heart,
Somewhile before my tears be frozen dry."
"If thou wouldst have my help," I said, "impart
  Thy name, and if I loose thee not, I pray
To go down to the ice's lowest part."
"My name's Monk Alberic," he answered, "yea,
  'Twas I that evil garden's fruit supplied,
And here with dates for figs I have to pay."

"O art thou dead already?" I replied;
"I have no knowledge," he in answer said,
"What may my body on the earth betide.
This Ptolemæa stands in such good stead,
That oftentimes the spirit raineth here
Before it hath by Atropos been sped;
And that more willingly thou mayest clear
This glassy-frozen weeping from my face,
Learn now, that when the soul a bond so dear
Betrays, as I have done, straight in her place
A fiend takes up the body's governing,
Until its time has run the apportion'd space.
She to a such like tank falls tempesting;
And still may seem on earth, for all I know,
That shade, who toward my right is wintering,
Thou mayst perchance tell, if just come below.
Ser Branca d'Oria's he, and many a year
Has past away since he is pent up so."
"Methinks," I answered, "thou deceiv'st me here,
For Branca d'Oria never ceased to be,
But drinks, and eats, and sleeps, and dons his gear."

"Before yet Michael Zanche fell," said he,
"Into the Malebranche moat up there,
Where boils the clammy pitch, the man you see,
Within his body left a fiend to bear
Rule in his place, and so did one beside
Who with him in the treason had a share.
But now at last extend thy hand," he cried,
"And loose mine eyes," and them I did not loose,
And churlishness to him was dignified.
O Genoese, ye men from all good thewes
Estranged, and filled with every taint accurst,
Why does not earth to bear you quite refuse?
For one of your's I found beside the worst
Romagnian ghost, who, in the spirit, by
His works within Cocytus is immerst,
And in the flesh seems living still on high.

CANTO XXXIV.

"'Vexilla prodeunt' of the King of Hell
To us-ward; wherefore look," my master said,
"Before thee, if thou canst the object spell."
As shows, where breath of some great cloud is shed,
Or when the night enwinds our hemisphere,
A mill far off, whose vanes by wind are sped,
To such a fabric seemed I to be near;
Then shrank I backward from the frost behind
My guardian, for no other grot was here.
And now, (with terror are my verses twined,)
We came to where the ghosts were covered quite,
And through appeared, like straws in glass confined.
Some lie down flat, and others stand upright;
One on his soles, another on his hair;
Some, bent like bows, the feet and head unite.

And now when we so far advanced were,
That fit my master thought I should behold
The creature that had once the semblaunt fair;
Then me in front of him he set, and told,
"Lo Dis! and lo the place where thou perforce
With hardihood thy bosom must enfold!"
Ah me! if I was here benumbed and hoarse,
Ask not, O reader, for I will not strive
To tell, for language offers no resource.
I did not die, nor yet remain alive;
Think now, if grain of wit reside in thee,
My state, which of the twain thou must deprive.
The sovran of the dolorous monarchy
Stood half-breast high above the ice-bound lake,
And less to make a giant wants in me,
Then giants want, an arm of his to make.
Ah judge, how great a whole ye must allow
That in it such a part so vast can take.
If he was fair as he is loathly now,
Well might proceed from him all woe we rue,
If he against his Maker raised his brow.

Ah me! how passing strange I thought to view
Upon his head three faces that were joined;
The one in front, and that of crimson hue;
The others, which upon the first confined
Above the midst of either back, were twain,
And at the fittings of the crest combined.
The one betwixt a white and yellow stain,
The right was such to look on, as are they
Who dwell, where Nilus lapses to the plain.
From under each two mighty wings made way,
Of magnitude to suit so vast a bird;
No sail on sea can such a breadth display.
They had no plumes, but like a bat's appeared,
And these did in a winnowing combine,
From under which a threefold wind was stirred,
That froze Cocytus from its core; his eyne
Were six, and down a threefold chin beneath
A bloody slaver welled, and weeping brine.
At every mouth he mumbled with his teeth
A traitor, in the manner of a mill,
And made of three their miserable sheath.

To him in front the biting did no ill,
To match the raxing, whence the skin was ta'en
Full oft from all the spine, and came back still.
"That higher spirit which has huger pain,
He," said my guide, "is Jude Iscariot,
Whose skull inside, and legs without remain.
Of those who undermost their heads have got,
This one is Brutus, whom the black jaws rend;
See how he writhes, and sound he utters not!
And that is Cassius large-limb'd, but attend,
That night again is rising, and that now
We should depart, for we have seen the end."
On this I claspt his neck, (he taught me how,)
And then his time and place elected well,
And when the wings were opened wide enow,
Attached himself upon the tangled fell,
And down from lock to lock began to ply
Atween the shaggy ribs and frozen shell.
When we had barely come to where the thigh
Turns on the broader haunch, my guide then bore
His head with mickle stress and agony,

Around to where his feet had hung before,
And griped the shag, as one that climbs uphill,
That I seemed going back to hell once more.
"Hold firmly," said my master, panting still
Like one forespent, "for by such stairs alone
Must we dispart us from this vast of ill."
Then reared me through a perforated stone,
And on its margin made me take my seat,
And toward me thence with wary step came on.
I lifted up mine eyes, and thought to meet
With Lucifer, as I had left him last,
And saw him stretch into the air his feet.
If I was then bewildered and aghast,
Let that gross vulgar judge, who cannot see
The nature of the point which I had passed.
"Get up afoot," my guide commanded me;
"Our road is long, and difficult our way,
And now by middle tierce the sun must be."
No palace lobby now before us lay;
A prison-house autocthonous was this,
On evil floor, in penury of day.

"Or ever I depart from the abyss,
Speak, master," said I, when I rose upright,
"To solve the error which around me is.
Where is the ice? and how is he thus pight
Heels over head? how has the sun traverst
In such brief time from eve to morning light?"
"Thou deemest," he made answer, "as at first,
To be beyond the centre, where I leant
On that ill worm by whom the globe is pierced.
Thou wast there only during my descent;
But when I turned, we then the place attained,
To which the course of every weight is bent,
And thou the further hemisphere hast gained,
Opposed to that which by the mainland wide
Is clad, beneath whose cope the life was drained
From him, who void of sin drew breath and died.
Thou hast thy feet upon a tiny sphere,
Which of Judaica makes the further side;
They there have eve when we have morning here;
And he, whose fleece was for my ladder given,
Stands planted, even as he stood whilere.

On this side was it that he fell from heaven,
And hence the land, which spread out here of old,
Across her face for dread the sea hath driven,
And now doth our own hemisphere enfold,
And him to shun perchance the vacant spot,
Was left by land seen here, and upward rolled."
A place there is, from Beelzebub remote
As far out yonder as the Grave extends,
Whereof not sight but hearing taketh note,
By reason of a brook which there descends,
Across a channelled rock, by which it throws
Its nibbling current, and obliquely bends.
My guide and I by this hid path arose,
To see again the world so clear and bright,
And taking not a thought of all repose,
He foremost, and I after, clombe the height,
Until some splendors, borne by heaven's cars,
Across a rounded crevice kist our sight;
We issued thence to re-behold the stars.

THE END.

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